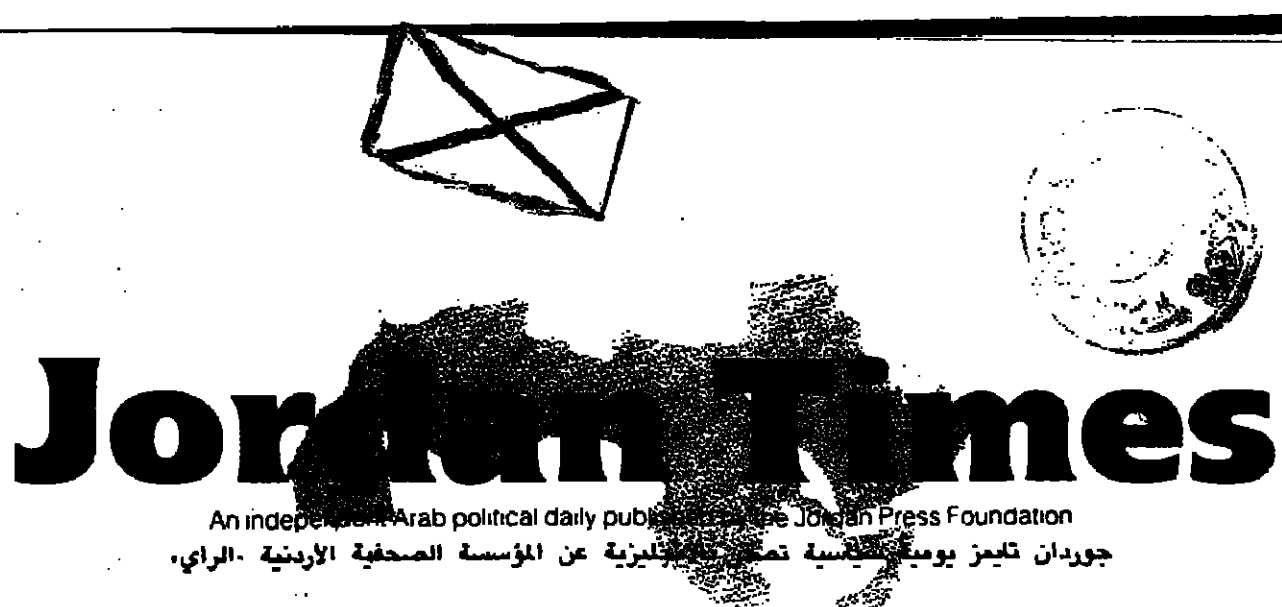


U.N. appoints Sahnoun to Africa post

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Algerian diplomat Mohammad Sahnoun was named Wednesday as joint United Nations and Organisation of African Unity representative to Africa's troubled Great Lakes region. The region comprises Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his "grave preoccupation with the problems of the region" where hundreds of thousands have died in civil wars, said spokesman Fred Eckhard. Mr. Sahnoun's mandate is three fold. Mr. Annan says in a letter to Security Council President Hisashi Owada: To promote peaceful settlements to regional conflicts, particularly in eastern Zaire and Burundi; organise an international conference on peace and security in the region; and restore unity in strife-torn Zaire.



An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراي

Senate confirms Albright, Cohen

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Senate, with no word or vote of dissent, confirmed Madeleine Albright as secretary of state Wednesday, making her the highest-ranking woman in any administration. After a totally one-sided debate, senators voted 99-0. Ms. Albright's swearing-in was expected as early as Thursday. She was the first of President Bill Clinton's second-term cabinet to pass senate muster. The Senate also confirmed former Republican senator William Cohen as defence secretary, succeeding William Perry. The vote was 99-0. A veteran of 18 years in the Senate, where he served on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and six years in the House of Representatives, Mr. Cohen is the sole Republican tapped for president Clinton's second-term cabinet.

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Price: Jordan 200 Fils

King visits S. Arabia today

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein today (Thursday) begins a visit to Saudi Arabia during which he will perform the Umra (the lesser pilgrimage). The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The King will later hold talks with Saudi King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz and other senior Saudi officials on bilateral ties and issues of common concern. In an interview with the Saudi Al Bilad newspaper on Wednesday, King Hussein described Jordanian-Saudi relations as strong and historic, pointing to the efforts exerted by King Fahd in supporting Arab and Islamic causes. King Hussein will be accompanied by some family members and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, a Royal Palace official said. King Hussein met King Fahd last August for the first time since the Gulf crisis of 1990-91.

Arafat pledges to declare state despite Netanyahu threats

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat brushed aside Israeli objections Wednesday and said that a Palestinian state will be declared "at the right time." Mr. Arafat's statement came shortly after the Israeli government said it would take harsh action if the Palestinians unilaterally declare an independent state. "Declaring the Palestinian state is a Palestinian, international and Arab decision, not an Israeli decision," Mr. Arafat told reporters after meeting with Arab League officials in Cairo. "At the right time, and after this interim period is over, the Palestinians will declare their Palestinian state," he said. Israel and the Palestinians are to complete a final peace agreement by May 1999 that will determine

Israel plans to 'annex' large slice of West Bank land to Jerusalem

ISRAELI AUTHORITIES submitted a proposal Wednesday to annex a large tract of West Bank territory to Jerusalem, prompting warnings by a Palestinian official that the move could spark a bloodbath. The plan, submitted to a ministerial committee headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, would link East Jerusalem to the settlement of Maale Adumim, five kilometres away in the West Bank, said an Israeli spokeswoman. She declined to give details but the Yediot Aharonot newspaper said the project would involve the construction of housing estates, highways, public transportation lines and other infrastructure between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim. The plan was drawn up by the Israeli municipality in Jerusalem, headed by Ehud Olmert, a close Netanyahu associate. Mr. Netanyahu's "ministerial committee for Jerusalem affairs" took no decision on the proposal Wednesday, but spokeswoman Dina Segal said the panel would resume discussion of the matter next week. The committee includes the defence, foreign and eight other ministers. The last time the same body met in September it approved a recommendation by Mr. Olmert to open a second entrance to an archaeological tunnel near Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.

Rains, snow expected today and tomorrow

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will be drenched with heavy and occasional thundery rains as well as snow Thursday and Friday, the Department of Meteorology said Wednesday. The rain which started falling Wednesday will intensify Thursday and Friday and extend to cover all regions of the country as a result of a cold depression centred over Syria and moving southwards towards Jordan, a department official forecasts. Hail and snow would fall on mountainous regions rising 1,000 metres above sea level including Sweileh, Jubeiha and parts of western Amman Wednesday night, Thursday and Friday with maximum temperatures expected to reach six degrees Centigrade during the day dropping to two or three at night, the official said. The official warned of flash floods in low lying regions and said visibility will be poor especially in the hilly regions due to low clouds and fog.



A man, shielding himself with an umbrella, waits for a passing taxi in a rain-drenched street of Amman on Wednesday (photo by Yusef Allan)

Before the rains began Wednesday, the King Talal Dam reservoir, the largest in the Kingdom, had just a little above 40 million cubic metres of flood waters, according to an official at the dam site. He

told the Jordan Times that the level of water in the reservoir which has an overall storage capacity of 80 million cubic metres will rise further as a result of the rains expected on Thursday and Friday.

The Jordan Valley Authority, which controls the dams that irrigate the valley's farmlands in the summer, said last week that the country's dams have held a total of 51,382 million cubic metres of water.

Israel and Syria passing messages, Levy discloses

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's Foreign Minister David Levy said on Wednesday he was exchanging messages with Damascus indirectly and was ready to meet his Syrian counterpart any time to discuss reviving peace talks. Mr. Levy also reaffirmed that Israel was ready to resume peace negotiations with Syria based on the "land-for-peace" principle which governed the 1991 Madrid peace conference. "Syria must resume these peace negotiations with Israel, without any preconditions, on the basis of the principles which permitted the organisation of the Madrid conference," Mr. Levy said on Israel radio. "We have agreed to, among these principles, U.N. resolution 242, even if we interpret it differently (than the Arabs)," he said. The Israeli newspaper Haaretz had reported earlier in the day that Mr. Levy and Syrian Foreign Minister Fawuk Al Sharaa have been exchanging messages through a senior European cabinet minister. It did not identify the middleman. "I hope the things which Syria in fact intends in its strategy — the way it is passed to me — is peace. So the messages I am passing are with this aim," Mr. Levy told Israel Radio when asked about the newspaper report. But he declined to publicly discuss "a single detail" of the exchange. On-again, off-again peace talks that began in 1991 have been stuck over the fate of the Golan Heights seized by Israel from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. Syria demands the return of all the strategic plateau but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu has rejected any withdrawal from the Heights. A spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu said on Sunday the Israeli leader, elected in May, was prepared to resume talks with Syria, suspended about a year ago, without preconditions. Previous talks were based on the concept of Israel trading occupied Arab land-for-peace. "I am ready at any time, at any moment, in any place, to meet the Syrian foreign minister to check and examine the possibility of entering into negotiations," Mr. Levy said. Haaretz said European officials hoped to bring Mr. Levy and Mr. Sharaa together in April at a meeting of foreign ministers to further a joint Middle Eastern, North African and European cooperative effort. The Israeli pullback from most of the West Bank town of Hebron last week has revived peace moves with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and interest in the long-stalled talks with Syria. U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk appealed to Syria on Tuesday to use Hebron as a springboard to further peacemaking. Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Zoubi slammed Mr. Netanyahu on Monday, saying: "There is no other option but for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from the Golan." Israeli intelligence has warned the government that Syria is now the main threat to the Jewish state and that war is possible this year if the two sides do not resume peace talks, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported.

Libya breaks air ban

TUNIS (R) — Libya said on Wednesday a Libyan plane had flown an official delegation to Ghana's capital Accra despite a 1992 United Nations ban on its international flights. Libyan state-run television showed footage of a Libyan Arab Airlines plane and the main sign over an arrival hall reading Accra airport with Libyan officials being greeted. A Libyan plane landed in Accra airport and left the Ghanaian capital less than three hours later, a source at Accra airport confirmed. "A Libyan Boeing 747 arrived here at 8.39 p.m. (2039 GMT) yesterday and left at 11 p.m.," said the source who was at the airport then. Officials later removed records of the flight, added the source.

Two killed in W. Bank village

QABATYEH (R) — A Palestinian suspected of aiding Israel and a Jordanian were killed on Tuesday in the West Bank village of Qabatyeh by unknown assailants, Palestinian sources said on Wednesday. Mohammad Nimer Kmeil, 32, a Palestinian who had an Israeli identity card, and Majed Khalil Ahmed, 28, a Jordanian, were shot dead in front of Kmeil's house, the sources said. "Majed Ahmad is a Jordanian of Palestinian origin and he was visiting," but Kmeil holds an Israeli identity card, and both were killed in the village which is still under Israeli security control, said one Palestinian source. The source said joint Israeli-Palestinian patrol jeeps arrived at the site of the shooting on Tuesday night. Israeli soldiers took Kmeil's body to an Israeli hospital and Ahmad's body was taken to Jenin hospital in the West Bank. Palestinian police declined comment on the killing.

Kabariti and Palestinian official review trade, economic relations

AMMAN (J. T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Palestinian Minister of Civil Affairs Jamil Tarifi on Wednesday discussed economic and trade links between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that transportation of goods between the two sides and increasing the amounts of Jordanian cement to the self-rule areas were at the focus of the discussions, which also covered a number of other issues of common concern. Israel last month announced it was allowing Jordan to transport cement and oil directly to the Pales-

tinian territories. Jordan started sending cement to the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Jan. 1, 1997 but the transport of oil would have to wait until a decision has been reached on the issue with the Palestinians, according to Transport Minister Nasser Lawzi. The arrangement on cement was part of an accord reached between Jordan and Israel on replacing a back-to-back system of transport of Jordanian exports through the crossing points in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Araba. Also on Wednesday Mr. Kabariti received Adel Al Safi, head of an academy which serves as a branch of

the U.N. University in Amman. Mr. Safi briefed Mr. Kabariti on the academy's plans and programmes. The academy has planned a series of three-week seminars and meetings to be held in Amman in June with prominent academics from around the world attending, he said. Dr. Safi voiced appreciation of Jordan's support for the academy and its programmes and for hosting the first branch of the U.N. University in the Kingdom. He also expressed gratitude to their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor for their keen interest in the university's activities.

Likud, Labour in broad consensus over final status of Palestinian lands

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Leading officials in Israel's ruling and opposition parties completed a document Wednesday outlining broad consensus on a final status for the Palestinian territories, despite disagreement from many of their colleagues. The document was drawn up by teams headed by Michael Eitan, a leading member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party, and Yossi Beilin, one of the main architects of the Oslo peace accords and a candidate for the leadership of the Labour Party. The plan has not been backed by Mr. Netanyahu and will only be published next week. It stipulates that Israel would keep under its authority most Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Those settlements in outlying areas would receive special status ensuring their links to Israel. The sides did not agree on what shape Palestinian self-rule should ultimately take, with the Labour team supporting the foundation of a state and Likud preferring only a "broad autonomy." But Mr. Eitan insisted he and Mr. Beilin had agreed on most of the restrictions which should be placed on the Palestinian entity,

including that it be demilitarised. "What the limitations of the entity will be, and what its relation to the Arab World and Israel and the whole world will be — all this we have agreed upon," Mr. Eitan told Israel radio. The two also were unable to compromise on the issue of the return of Palestinian refugees who fled the territories during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. They also left unresolved the future status of the Jordan Valley, where there are several Israeli farming settlements and that many Israelis want to maintain as the country's eastern security border. The talks, which Mr. Eitan said have the blessing of Mr. Netanyahu, are aimed at reaching a broad-national consensus in Israel on how much of the West Bank should be handed over to the Palestinians and whether the Palestinians should have an independent state. Ephraim Sneh, a minister in the previous Labour government, said the agreement does not offer the Palestinians an independent state, nor does it promise that Israel will stop expanding the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which he called "a basic issue for the permanent agreement with the Palestinians."

The Likud's Michael Kleiner said he would not sign the agreement because "it does not guarantee Israeli control of the international border crossing points. It will not prevent the return of (Palestinian) refugees, and it offers to hand over 50 per cent of the territory in (the West Bank) to the Palestinians — even before agreement has been reached on the permanent borders." Mr. Beilin said the document was important to Labour and Likud because "in it the Likud finally abandons the dream of the greater land of Israel, while Labour gives up the idea of folding up the settlements." The final settlement talks, which Mr. Netanyahu has promised to begin soon, are supposed to resolve such ultra-sensitive issues as the status of Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements and the question of Palestinian statehood. Mr. Sneh said he and many others in his party rejected the plan as too close to the nationalist creed of Likud. "There is no agreement on the principle that there will be two separate entities in the land of Israel," Mr. Sneh said, referring to the area from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea in which the Likud insists Israel will remain the only sovereign nation.

PLO backs Libyan offer to stranded Palestinians

CAIRO (R) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said on Wednesday it supported Libya's abortive attempt to help more than 200 Palestinians stranded on the Libyan-Egyptian border, despite the refugees' hostility towards Libyan and PLO representatives. Libya tried to persuade the refugees back to Libya on Tuesday but the attempt ended in fiasco when refugees armed with sticks, stones and knives kept Libyan officials at bay and refused to go along with the Libyan proposals. Most of the refugees have spent more than one year in their squalid encampment between the Libyan and Egyptian border posts. Libya threw them out in 1995 and Egypt refuses to let them in unless they can prove that a third country will accept them. The Palestinian consul in

House approves changes to law on State Security Court

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — The government on Wednesday won approval for a draft law extending the powers of the State Security Court in the full Lower House of Parliament after the draft was turned down by the House Judicial Committee two weeks ago. In a Jan. 5 session, the Judicial Committee, chaired by Islamist Deputy Ibrahim Keilani (Amman), ruled that the draft law could not be endorsed because the State Security Court was an exceptional court and therefore extending its powers would be "undemocratic" and would contradict the concept of an independent judiciary. But when the draft legislation, which in essence adds 10 paragraphs to the existing law related to the State Security Court, was endorsed with a 42-27 vote by the House on Wednesday.

Deputies endorse Royal Organisation for Development and Charitable Work
HIS MAJESTY King Hussein will put "all his worldly assets" in the Royal Organisation for Development and Charitable Work, which Parliament established on Wednesday through the enactment of a 1966 law. Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said. Mr. Kabariti said that the association "will not be an organisation in the normal sense of the word, rather its establishment is a personal desire of His Majesty the King." The draft law, which was approved by the House, stipulates that the organisation will be established as an independent legal, financial and administrative entity. The organisation will be based in Amman and will have branches all over the Kingdom. According to the draft law, which was submitted by the Labour and Social Development organisation at the Lower House on Jan. 7, 1996, the charitable association will participate as well as be governed by activities in the country. It will be appointed by Royal board of trustees which will have an executive secretary and a general manager. The association will have an independent budget approved by the board of trustees and will be exempted from all taxes. The prime minister and his cabinet, the draft law stipulated, will be responsible for the implementation of law.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 7)

Arabs divided over Sudan plea for help

CAIRO (Agencies) — Divisions have emerged in Arab capitals over pleas from the Islamic-led regime in Sudan for help against what Khartoum insists are Ethiopian and Eritrean attacks on its eastern border.

The Cairo-based 22-member Arab League, of which Sudan is a member, reacted to an official complaint from Sudan by distributing it to the other members without issuing any judgement on the fighting.

The three main Arab powers — Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia — who usually coordinate their views failed to agree on Sudan while Iraq, Qatar, Yemen, Jordan and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement voiced sympathy.

Sudan considers the fighting as a plan by the United States to destabilise Khartoum, which is on Washington's list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism.

The president of the United Arab Emirates said his country was willing to help end the fighting in eastern Sudan, which he described as an internal matter.

"If our Sudanese brothers ask us to intervene with the parties (implicated in the conflict) we will be ready to do so," said Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan after meeting with Sudanese Cabinet Secretary Salahuddin Mohammad Ahmed Karrar.

"I urge our brothers in Sudan to end their conflict and if they are not able to do so, they only have to ask Arab countries to intervene," Sheikh Zayed told the official UAE news agency WAM.

Egypt, Sudan's closest neighbour, and Saudi Arabia turned a deaf ear when Sudanese Vice President Al-Zubair Muhammad Saleh called on President Hosni Mubarak and King Fahd respectively seeking support.

In fact, statements issued in Cairo and Riyadh dismissed claims by Sudan that Eritrea and Ethiopia were responsible for the attacks which started Jan. 12 against its eastern border.

They stressed it was only a domestic problem involving the Islamic government of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir and a coalition of opposition forces.

Mr. Mubarak made it clear he had no intention of intervening in Sudan so as to avoid "attacking Sudanese people" and said that southern rebel leader and military commander of the opposition John Garang had assured him he had no

intention of carving up Sudan.

The Saudi daily Al Riyadh, which usually reflects the official Saudi view, drove the nail home as Mr. Saleh walked away empty-handed from talks with King Fahd.

"Any Arab action will have no effect (on the fighting) because reconciliation in Sudan is an affair which concerns the Sudanese," Al Riyadh said.

These statements appeared to bolster the opposition which has turned up the heat on Khartoum, calling for the overthrow of the regime and claiming military gains.

"The real front is in Khartoum and your duty... is to rally the people and overthrow the corrupt regime," Sadeq Al Mahdi, Sudan's former prime minister and head of the Umma Party, told the armed forces and police.

Colonel Garang, who this week stressed that Islam and Sudan's unity were not threatened, meanwhile claimed in a statement from Asmara to have killed 1,260 government troops during clashes in eastern Sudan between Jan. 12 and 16.

But refusing defeat, Sudan pressed on with its diplomatic drive to secure support with visits by Mr. Saleh to Syria and Qatar, which has already announced plans to set up a ministerial committee to help the Sudanese people.

In Damascus, Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam told Mr. Saleh his country "is opposed to any foreign intervention in the affairs of Sudan" and linked Sudan's security to overall Arab security.

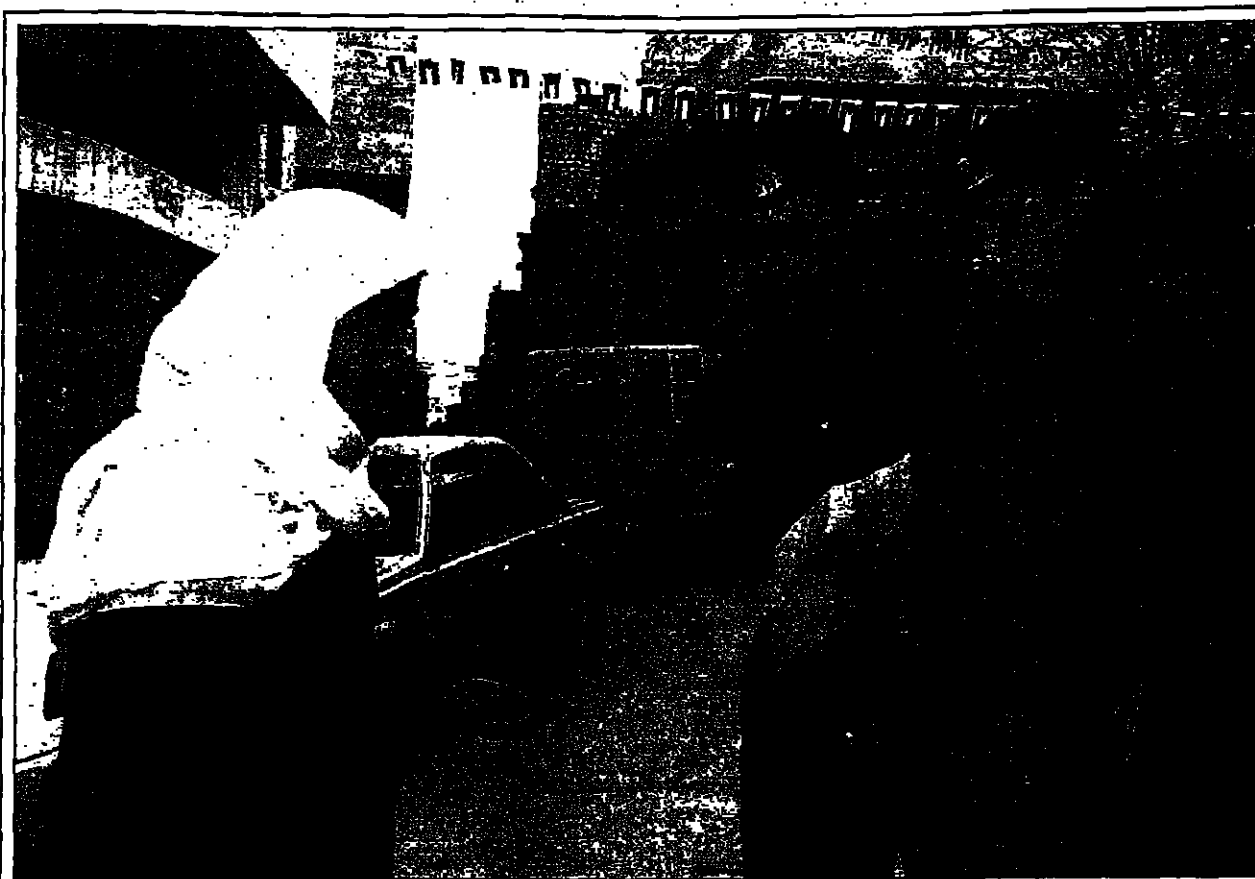
But he fell short of leveling any charges against Eritrea and Ethiopia which have denied any involvement in Sudan.

Jordan, Iraq and Yemen called for Arab support for Khartoum and denounced foreign attacks on a member Arab state.

"The (Jordanian) parliament considers the aggression on Sudan a precursor to aggression against other Arab countries," a statement in Amman said, describing the fighting as a threat to Sudanese unity, security and stability.

It urged the Arab League to reactivate the dormant Arab defence pact and "to present the case to the international community in support of Sudan."

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Sudan was the "victim of a conspiracy that is targeting the unity of its people and territories."



PALESTINIAN CONTROL: A Palestinian woman gives details to two Palestinian policemen after being involved in a minor traffic accident on Wednesday in the Palestinian controlled part of the West Bank town of Hebron as Palestinian police assume responsibilities for daily life after the Israeli troop redeployment from 80 per cent of Hebron. The area of the city in this photo is along the line dividing the Jewish and the Palestinian controlled areas (Reuters photo)

Israelis, Libyans cooperate in fight against AIDS

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ignoring the state of war between their governments, Israelis and Libyans are working together to battle the spread of AIDS in Libya. An official with the Jerusalem AIDS project said Wednesday.

Project chairman Inon Schenker said the cooperation began last year when Israeli educator Hani Rosenberg gave a seminar in Europe on AIDS prevention to young doctors from around the world, including three physicians from Libya.

"The Libyan physicians found that the education package we developed here in Israel and which has been translated into Arabic was very much relevant to North Africa," Mr. Schenker told AFP.

"Not only have they begun using material developed by us but have been very successful," he said.

Libya does not provide official figures for AIDS infections in the country but health experts estimate there are about 100 cases, compared to official figures in Israel of 1,501 persons infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS and 459 people with the disease itself.

Mr. Schenker said the Jerusalem AIDS project had been in regular direct telephone contact with the Libyan doctors, whom he did not identify, and that he was unaware of any

attempt by the Libyan authorities to halt the contacts even though the government of Colonel Muammar Qaddafi remains one of Israel's most fierce opponents.

"We are putting together the enemies of the past to fight this virus and disease," Mr. Schenker said, noting that according to World Health Organisation figures, the number of HIV-infected persons had doubled in the Middle East over the past two years although the disease remains much less prevalent than in Africa or Asia.

"We don't really mind or care who are our partners are in fighting this disease," he said. "We are very happy whenever people put themselves beyond politics and help each other."

Mr. Schenker said the Jerusalem AIDS project also works closely with educators and health workers in the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia and had won acclaim for its Arabic language AIDS prevention materials aimed at adolescents.

"You can't prevent Israelis from being infected if you can't work with foreign workers coming from Jordan or the Palestinian territories or elsewhere," he said. "This needs regional action and we have been able to develop a regional network of health workers and educators for AIDS prevention."

Gulf war blast may have harmed troops — study

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. soldiers who were close to Iraqi gas weapons blown up at the end of the 1991 Gulf war have more pain in muscles and joints than those who were further away, a government report said on Tuesday.

It was the first government study to show not only that U.S. troops were near the explosions of Iraqi chemical weapons but also that some might have been made sick by the blasts.

Dr. Kenneth Kizer, the department of Veterans Affairs' under secretary for health, reported the finding at a hearing by a House of Representatives government reform subcommittee but said more research was needed to determine whether the gas explosions in fact caused the muscle and joint pains.

Dr. Kizer said the study was based on medical examinations of 1,978 of the 21,799 U.S. soldiers that the Defense Department had said were within 50 kilometres when U.S. troops blew up Iraq's kamisayah weapons dump, which contained sarin and mustard gas weapons, in March 1991.

He said 81 of the soldiers "who have been identified as part of the on-site kamisayah demolition team have been diagnosed with musculoskeletal conditions at a higher rate than veterans who were further away."

The finding was preliminary, coming from a computer analysis that showed those facts, he said, and more study was needed to determine whether low levels of gas at kamisayah indeed caused those and other ailments.

Bernard Rostker, the senior Pentagon official charged with overseeing the investigation into Gulf war illnesses, said later that the findings did not represent a formal study and that no conclusions could be reached immediately.

"This is not a study. It is five or six pages of tables with no explanation," Mr. Rostker, an assistant navy secretary, told reporters. "I've got five tables without any documentation... I'm confused as to what the differences in the different tables are."

Mr. Rostker said he could not say whether muscle ache and joint pain were common results of low level exposure to nerve agents because "we don't have a lot of experience with low level chemical exposures that we can document at this point."

The computer study produced the first evidence in what has been a mystery of whether chemical agents may have been one cause of symptoms suffered by thousands of Gulf war veterans that have been called Gulf war syndrome. They include fatigue, muscle and joint pains and memory trouble.

The study, released at the hearing, showed that 30.9 per cent of the 81 soldiers close to the explosion had muscle and joint pains, compared to 25.9 per cent of all 1,978 in the area and 25.3 per cent of all 52,216 Gulf war veterans the veterans administration has examined.

But the computer study found the 81 soldiers suffered fewer mental problems and respiratory, nervous system and blood circulation problems than the other two groups.

Bahrain preparing trial of Iran-backed militants

NICOSIA (AFP) — Bahrain is completing preparations for a trial of 81 people accused of belonging to an Iranian-backed group plotting to overthrow the Bahraini government, lawyers said Wednesday.

The state security court is expected to begin trying the suspected Hizbollah-Bahrain militants after the Holy Month of Ramadan ends on Feb. 7, lawyers contacted in Bahrain said.

All files are ready and the minister of justice is consulting with the prosecutor to designate lawyers for the defendants who could face the death penalty if convicted of the charges.

Fifty-four suspects are being held by the Bahraini authorities, while the remaining 27 are at large and will be tried in absentia.

On June 3, Bahrain publicly announced the arrests of 29 militants and accused Iran of having armed and financed Hizbollah-Bahrain in a bid to overthrow the government. More were arrested later.

Iran rejected the accusation.

In October, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ben Mubarak Al Khalifa said relations with Iran had improved following Syrian mediation.

At least 26 people have been killed in Bahrain since anti-government unrest erupted in December 1994 with Shiite Muslim demands that the Sunni Muslim-led government restore the parliament suspended in 1975.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE paper's manager held in Sudan

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Al Khaleej newspaper said on Wednesday that Sudanese authorities had arrested its office manager in Khartoum. It said security forces arrested Nouredine Madani on Tuesday without giving any reasons. It said the Sudanese Alwan newspaper had on Saturday attacked Al Khaleej and the other UAE paper Al Bayan for printing material alleged to be opposed to Sudan's beliefs.

Sharansky to visit Russia next week

MOSCOW (AFP) — Israeli Trade and Industry Minister Nathan Sharansky, who was formerly a Soviet dissident, will begin a four-day visit to Russia Monday for talks aimed at boosting economic cooperation, the Israeli embassy said Wednesday. An embassy statement said it would be Mr. Sharansky's first visit to Russia since he left the country for Israel in 1986, as well as the first visit to Russia by a minister in the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Mr. Sharansky will head a 90-strong delegation of government officials and Israeli businessmen, and their talks are expected to focus on trade in telecommunications, medical equipment and agriculture. The Israeli officials plan to meet Russian Economy Minister Yevgeny Yasin, Health Minister Tatyana Dmitriyeva, Telecommunications Minister Vladimir Bulgak and Agriculture Minister Viktor Khlyustan. Talks are also planned with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Fortov, who co-chairs the Russian-Israeli Economic Commission. Israeli-Russian trade has doubled every year for the past five years, and in 1996 reached nearly \$500 million, the press release said.

Mufti: No top government jobs for women

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's mufti Sheikh Nasr Farid Wassel has said women should not seek high-ranking government posts because that would be against nature, the official news agency MENA reported on Wednesday. "If a woman asked for a high-ranking position in government, she would be acting against nature because such jobs demand firmness while a woman's nature is characterised by clemency and tenderness," the top cleric said.

Dubai police seek help from Taiwan, S. Korea

DUBAI (AFP) — The emirate of Dubai is sending a police delegation to Taiwan and South Korea to seek help in bolstering its elite police force, Al Bayan newspaper reported on Wednesday. The delegation from the Dubai emergency force will fly this week to the two southeast Asian countries for two weeks of meetings with officials and to visit police institutions, said its chief, Brigadier Jumma Al Sayegh. "We want to get acquainted with the functions of the emergency units there and benefit from their advanced technical experience," he told the paper. Brig. Sayegh said the visit would pave the way for a two-year plan to develop the Dubai emergency force, which is tasked with protecting vital installations, preventing riots and illegal protests, and dealing with bomb threats.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

13:30 Cartoon — Ovide & the Gang and Iris
14:00 French Programmes
14:30 They Came From Outer Space
15:00 Feature Film: "Sea Dragon"
16:50 Call For Prayer and Ifar
17:30 French Programmes
19:30 News Headlines
19:33 Parenthood
20:00 Islam in the West
20:30 Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
21:10 Kung Fu: The Legend
22:00 News in English
22:25 Islam in a Changing World
22:25 Feature Film: "The World Guy"
23:00 Mini Series — False Arrest (Pt. I) (Part II to be continued on Friday)
23:00 Ramadan Talks

EVER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:30 Sunrise Doha
14:40 Dhulh
17:05 Mr. Asr
18:25 Jib

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifeh, Tel. 510740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 827126.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
The effect of the depression will intensify during the weekend. Temperatures will drop significantly with rainfall expected in "g" regions and winds becoming westerly to northwesterly moderate, to active. Snow will also fall over areas that are 1,000 metres above sea level particularly in the southern parts of the Kingdom. In Aqaba, winds will

be north-easterly moderate to active and seas choppy.

Mini-Max. Temperatures
Amman 03/06
Aqaba 08/16
Deserts 03/09
Jordan Valley 08/15

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 98 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Rawhi Sukkar 856457
Dr. Fadel Al Khateeb 365456
Dr. Gazi Abu Shehida 523405
Dr. Moabbes Balaseh 519220
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636750
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmelsani pharmacy 637660
Nairoch pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Fahid Jaber 984549
Al Quds pharmacy 1
ZARQA:
Dr. Gazi T'ameeh 250080
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue

642362
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/52
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussain Medical Centre 813813/52
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

Akileh Maternity

642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmelsani 607071
Shmelsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muasher 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602404/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hilma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)755535
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:30 Sanaa (RJ)
08:15 Bombay (RJ)
08:15 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
15:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
17:15 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
18:10 Athens (RJ)
19:00 Moscow (RJ)
19:05 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
19:25 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:30 Casablanca, Rome (RJ)
19:45 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi, (add) (RJ)
02:45 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

11:00 Doha (Q7)
12:40 Doha (GF)
13:30 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Sharjah (AH)
15:15 Damascus (Q7)
16:15 Dubai (EK)
20:10 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
09:00 Moscow (RJ)
10:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:05 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:00 Rome, Paris (RJ)
12:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:20 Athens (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:20 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:30 Jakarta (add) (RJ)
21:45 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
07:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00 Istanbul (TK)
07:35 Beirut, London (BA)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
11:45 Damascus (Q7)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:00 Algiers (AH)
15:00 Riyadh (SV)
16:00 Doha (Q7)
17:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
22:50 Tel Aviv (LY)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 550/550
Banana (imported) 900/700
Cabbage 60/40
Carrot 200/160
Cauliflower 170/100
Cucumber (large) 180/100
Cucumber (small) 330/2000
Eggplant 150/100
Fava beans 800/650
Garlic 1100/850
Grape fruit 150/80
Lemon 360/250
Marrow (large) 140/100
Marrow (small) 220/180
Onion (green) 180/100
Onion (dry) 180/100
Orange 550/400
Peas 850/700
Pepper (hot) 280/180
Pepper (sweet) 280/180
Potato 260/160
Radish 130/100
Spinach 230/150
String beans 600/400
Tomato 150/100

By Francesca Cirio
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With so many Christians in Jordan, the rift between Christians and Muslims and the growing dissolution of the Christian heritage and communities, Jordanian Christians are divided over the establishment of a Christian political party.

"The establishment of a Christian party, on the same basis as we already have Islamic parties, not create new conflict but simply affirm Christian presence in the region and show the world that Arab does not mean Muslim only," maintains the leader of the proposed Christian Arab Democratic Party (CADP) S. Siwady.

Still in its founding phase and not yet licensed by the Ministry of Interior, the CADP has already gathered 500 signatures. Mr. Siwady told the Jordan Times.

Stressing that the party is open to members of any religion and that it is "many" of the signatories are Muslims, Mr. Siwady reassured those who are afraid the CADP will degenerate into Christian fanaticism that extremists will be systematically expelled from the party.

Renewing the national character of CADP, Mr. Siwady said that one of the actions undertaken by the fledgling party was to file an official petition to the Israeli government demanding the release of spiritual leader Hamas activist Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, jailed in Israel for over eight years and seriously ill.

However, some of the long Christian personalities in the Knesset have distanced themselves from the project and raised serious concerns over the consequences of the establishment of a Christian party.

When contacted by Jordan Times and asked to comment on Mr. Siwady's project, Christian leader of the St. Pious and Veterans Democrats and vet

Two bodies

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Authorities were able to locate two bodies from the bodies Tuesday from burnt tankers on Amman-Iraq highway, declared possible that people could have been the trucks when they hit flames.

"We were able to locate two bodies from the wreckage, however, there were no more bodies found. The two bodies were found when the trucks were hit by flames," an official said.

Officials were unable to identify any of the bodies as they were burnt beyond recognition and all belongings destroyed.

"The two bodies were found in a truck which was hit by a fire, which caused the metal to melt," a Civil Defence Department (CDD) official said.

The official stated it is likely that there were no survivors in the trucks.

"From our experience, Ministry, poultry

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Supply is currently coordinating with Duleit Poultry Company to provide poultry daily during the month of Ramadan.

Chairman Saleem E. said Wednesday.

Since the start of Ramadan the company has been selling poultry for

Third bomb hits Algeria as fears rise of civil war inferno

ALGIERS (AFP) — A new bomb blast rocked Algeria Wednesday as the people of Algiers struggled to come to terms with two deadly bombings the day before which raised fears of a cycle of violence unseen in the country since the war of independence 35 years ago.

The market-place attack in the garrison town of Blida, 50 kilometres from Algiers, killed at least two people and injured around 20, witnesses said. The explosives had been packed into a shopping bag. The bombing wave which began Sunday has killed more than 50 people and raised the intensity of the conflict between Algeria's Islamic fundamentalists and the military-backed government to new heights.

On Tuesday the fundamentalists, who launched their insurgency five years ago when elections they were poised to win were cancelled, said they planned to press on with their campaign of violence.

Around 150 people have been killed since the Holy Month of Ramadan began on Jan. 10.

A series of car-bomb attacks and mass knifings have heightened the climate

of fear and in the capital Algiers the normally packed streets were semi-deserted and traffic was light, with people apparently staying at home for fear of the bombing campaign.

On Tuesday two car-bombs attacks in Algiers killed seven people and wounded many more. On Sunday a powerful car-bomb explosion in a crowded cafe district of Algiers killed 42 according to unofficial tolls, and 21 according to official reports.

In the early hours of Sunday morning a suspected fundamentalist group attacked a village south of Algiers, killing 48 inhabitants, the daily *Liberte* said. The authorities set the figure at 36.

The Algerian press Wednesday strongly criticised the authorities for failing to stem the terror and comfort the population, and started questioning the motivation for the attacks.

The French-language *Le Matin* condemned a lack of reaction from the authorities and called on them to "share the dismay" of the people.

An editorialist on the daily *Al Watan* wondered how the fundamentalists were able to operate, and

asked: "What is the objective of attacking the poor, already burdened with the problems of life" in Algeria.

The overall tone of press reaction was a mixture of outrage and resignation.

Tension in Algiers and the region around the capital was high, with frequent rumours of further attacks. The killings are starting to terrify Algerians who last year had hoped that the war against the fundamentalists was being won.

Older Algerians compared the present situation with the months preceding Algeria's independence in 1962, when French colonialist extremists waged a terrorist war against both native Muslims and the French army, involving daily bomb and machine-gun attacks.

The most headline of the fundamentalist factions, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), warned in a tract published Tuesday in *Al Watan* that it would maintain its campaign of violence.

"The war will continue and will intensify during the (Islamic) Month of Ramadan and we have the means and the men to punish those who are not on our

side," GIA leader Antar Zouabri wrote according to the text.

The fasting month of Ramadan is considered by the GIA as an auspicious time for their holy war or "jihad" — which has received only partial support from the population.

Though spectacular, the latest series of killings is not entirely unprecedented. More than 50,000 have died since the conflict began in early 1992.

"There is no military strategy any more," a Western observer said on Monday. "The latest attacks prove that all that matters now is causing the maximum number of civilian casualties."

On Tuesday, the Islamic Society Movement (MSI-Hamas) headed by Mahfoud Nahnah, considered a moderate, said it planned to launch an initiative to stop the bloodshed.

"Given the inefficiency of denouncing the attacks and in response to the cries of mothers, widows and orphans, Hamas plans to undertake an initiative that would stop the bloodshed and reinstate security and stability," a communiqué said.

Chechen general confident of poll victory, but warlord fights back

GROZNY (AFP) — Chechen General Aslan Maskhadov is so sure he'll win next week's presidential elections he's stopped campaigning, but notorious young warlord Shamil Basayev is fighting back in an intensive village-to-village campaign.

There are no accurate polls ahead of the ruined republic's vote next Monday, but few dispute that Mr. Maskhadov is ahead, followed by Commander Basayev.

The two men, comrades in arms throughout the brutal 21-month war to drive out Russian troops, could not be more different and Moscow, hoping that the more diplomatic Maskhadov wins, is watching carefully.

Commander Basayev — the 32-year-old commander best known for taking 1,500 hostages in the southern Russia town of Budennovsk in 1995 and demanding peace talks for Chechnya — has dropped his military image to become the people's politician.

"You can't be closer to the people. He's a symbol of freedom," said Andi Osmayev, one of his campaign workers, with a sign of admiration.

On Tuesday alone, Commander Basayev's mud-splattered convoy of jeeps headed by a brand new white Mercedes stopped in six villages for marathon speeches and discussions

with locals.

At one stop, in the battle-scarred village of Petropavlovskaya, a crowd of about 200 gathered to see Commander Basayev, wearing a simple grey overcoat and mink hat, sitting at a table with long-bearded village elders.

Mr. Basayev spent much of his talk on promises that every Chechen wants to hear — ending the crime and poverty which plague the republic following the war. "In three months, I will sort out the crime," he said.

The prospect of even a kinder, gentler president Basayev at the negotiating table horrifies Moscow. But for many in bitter post-war Chechnya, that's just another plus point.

Many, especially former fighters who admire Commander Maskhadov's daring and ruthlessness, believe that only he can counter Russian efforts to halt the momentum towards full Chechen independence.

"We should elect the president Russia doesn't want. I'll vote for Shamil," said Commander Basayev, 34. "He played a huge role in the war at the key moment by going to Budennovsk. That stopped the war, at least for a few months, just when things were getting desperate."

"We need an iron hand. People like that here," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Maskha-

dov — the Chechen rebels' 45-year-old strategic mastermind and head negotiator — is refusing to play politics and retaining his image of reluctant statesman.

"He showed who he was during two years of war. There's nothing more to show, so he's stopped campaigning," said spokesman Mayarbyek Vachigayev with a smile. "We've got huge posters of him ready, like the ones Mr. Basayev has, but he's forbidden us from putting them up."

"He has no competition. We're totally calm." Unlike Commander Basayev, Mr. Maskhadov does not come from the mountains, where resistance to Russian rule has traditionally been stronger. Mr. Maskhadov's home region of Nadterechny has a major pro-Russian constituency.

This is used against him by his campaign rivals, but Mr. Maskhadov says his background will help him be a unifying president, while Commander Basayev would polarise the already clanish society.

"They know Mr. Maskhadov won't have them shot," Mr. Vachigayev said of the pro-Russian opposition.

Ruslan, a Grozny taxi driver, said: "I'll vote for Maskhadov because he's open and can work with different types of people. Mr. Basayev is very brave, but he's a military commander."

China lashes out at U.S. media coverage

BEIJING (AFP) — China launched a scathing attack Wednesday on the U.S. media, accusing it of plotting with anti-Beijing forces to undermine Sino-U.S. relations and fuel global fears of Chinese expansionist ambitions.

A lengthy signed commentary, carried by the Xinhua News Agency and published in full by most national dailies, said numerous U.S. scholars and media commentators harboured "deep-rooted" and hostile anti-China prejudices that threatened the recent thaw in Sino-U.S. relations.

"They have tried every means to undermine China's image worldwide by misleading the general public in the U.S., exerting influence on decision-makers and throwing up barriers to Sino-U.S. relations by means of the news media," the commentary said.

Beijing-based American correspondents have recently commented on being subjected to "good guy-bad guy" treatment by their Chinese handlers, who fete them with lavish banquets

one moment and threaten to obstruct their activities and accreditation the next.

In recent months, the Foreign Ministry has been delaying the accreditation of journalists for the Christian Science Monitor and Washington Post because of their perceived anti-China slants.

Such treatment reflects the importance China's propaganda chiefs are attaching to a positive press in 1997, which will witness the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty, a crucial party congress and an expected state visit to the United States by President Jiang Zemin.

According to the Xinhua commentary, the U.S. media has been "racking its brains" to come up with new anti-China theories that might throw a negative light on these events.

"Sometimes they spread pessimism and scepticism about the return and future of Hong Kong, urging the U.S. government to step forward to interfere in an attempt to protect the 'freedom' of Hong Kong," it

said.

"At other times they framed up lies about Tibet, claiming that the people of the ethnic Tibetan group are still being persecuted."

The strongly-worded commentary, titled "Misguidance in Vain," went on to denounce Americans in general, saying they regarded themselves as "the chosen people" with the right to impose their will on other countries.

It particularly attacked what it described as repeated attempts by U.S. reporters to present an image of China as a volatile superpower bent on territorial expansion.

"The basic reason for some Americans feeling nervous about China's growth is the fact that China's development has added strength to the force of peace in the world, which certainly is definitely no good news for the hegemonists," it said.

The commentary also vehemently rejected foreign charges of a rising tide of ultra-nationalism in China.

Clinton takes step towards Republicans on budget

WASHINGTON (R) — Saying he wanted to meet the Republicans halfway on balancing the budget, President Bill Clinton Tuesday proposed new savings in the politically sensitive Medicare programme.

In a surprise announcement one day after his inauguration for second term, Mr. Clinton proposed \$138 billion in Medicare savings over six years, saying this was an effort to find common ground with the Republicans, who control Congress.

The initiative appeared designed to make good on Mr. Clinton's promises to reach out to the Republicans to end the feud that has raged between the two parties for years on how to balance the federal budget.

"I am going to do my best to reach out to the Republicans," Mr. Clinton said before a budget strategy meeting with advisers. "I want to meet them halfway on this and on many other issues, and I hope they will meet me halfway."

Several top ranking Republicans welcomed his proposal.

"I am encouraged that the president has presented a more realistic estimate of the savings needed to make the Medicare programme solvent for the next decade," said Republican Senate majority leader Trent Lott of Mississippi.

"This frankly brightens. I think, the prospects for being able to get a balanced budget agreement," said House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich, an Ohio Republican who is also a key player on the budget.

"This gives us good hope ... that we could reach a budget agreement we believe sooner rather than later as a result of the president being willing to come forward and, as he said, move halfway," he added.

Mr. Clinton, and his aides, described the \$138 billion figure as a step that is both literally, and figuratively, halfway toward the Republicans' position on Medicare.

They said that the figure compared to the \$116 billion in savings over six years that Mr. Clinton proposed last year, as calculated by the Congressional Budget Office, and the \$158 billion that the Republicans had put forward.



Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov kisses the Bible while his wife Antonina (left) looks on at an open air East Orthodox mass in Sofia on Jan. 22, during transition of power ceremonies. Mr. Stoyanov, the first directly-elected head of state in Bulgaria's 1,300-year history, inherits a political deadlock that has blocked the formation of a new government to haul the country back from economic collapse (Reuters photo)

New Bulgaria president takes over

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria's outgoing President Zhelyu Zhelev formally handed over to his successor Petar Stoyanov Wednesday as the country remained in the grip of political paralysis and unrest.

Mr. Stoyanov took over command of the army from Mr. Zhelev, the first directly-elected head of state in Bulgaria's 1,300-year history, at a military parade outside the presidency.

The 44-year-old lawyer inherits severe economic crisis and a deadlock that has prevented formation of a new government.

He cancelled the usual champagne reception as inappropriate at a time when hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians are hungry.

The opposition has held 15 days of street protests for quick elections and against formation of a new cabinet by the ex-Communist Socialists, who have a majority in parliament.

Mr. Stoyanov, elected on the opposition ticket in presidential polls last November, backed calls for early elections at his swearing-in ceremony in parliament Sunday.

He has already begun mediation efforts and both go-

vernment and opposition hope the new president, whose legal speciality is divorce, can break the deadlock over formation of a new cabinet and the date for a general election.

Mr. Zhelev, a dissident philosopher and one of the key figures in Bulgaria's transition from one-party rule, lost a U.S.-style primary to Mr. Stoyanov last June.

"The new president looks more impressive than the previous one and I hope that his actions will be as statesmanlike as he looks," said engineer Petar Ivanov.

Later Wednesday Mr. Stoyanov laid a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Warrior to commemorate Bulgaria's war dead and swore an oath at one of Sofia's medieval churches.

The Socialists have offered elections in December, a year ahead of schedule, but want to form a second cabinet following the resignation of Prime Minister Zhan Videnov on Dec. 21. The opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) wants elections in March.

Mr. Videnov Tuesday urged Mr. Stoyanov to hand the mandate to the Socialists' nominee for premier,

Interior Minister Nikolai Dobrev, saying he had a crisis programme ready.

The opposition blames Mr. Videnov for leading the country to the verge of default on its \$10 billion foreign debt.

Government corruption and resistance to reform have left Bulgaria lagging behind other Eastern European states. Annual inflation is running at more than 300 per cent and a flight into dollars pushed the lev to a new all-time low Wednesday of 800 to the dollar from about 70 a year ago.

In his final address to the nation as president, Mr. Zhelev laid the blame on the country's ex-Communist rulers, and on the constitution, which gives most power to parliament at the expense of the presidency.

"Bulgaria's model of transition failed because for seven years economic and social reforms were not carried out. Instead of coming out of the crisis, Bulgaria is sinking lower," he said.

Mr. Zhelev, who last year founded a new political party, said he would work in his retirement for the expansion of the president's powers.

U.S. House reprimands, fines Gingrich

WASHINGTON (R) — In a historic and humbling rebuke to its leader, the U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to reprimand Speaker Newt Gingrich and order him to pay \$300,000 for violating House rules.

The pugnacious 53-year-old Georgia Republican, who appeared an unstoppable force when he took over his post two years ago, became the first House speaker in U.S. history to be punished for misconduct by formal vote of his colleagues.

He was not in the chamber for the 395-28 vote, the climax to two years of bitter partisan charges and counter-charges that undermined his authority.

After a brief debate notable for its decorum, 195 Republicans voted in favour of punishing the speaker. Five members abstained.

Mr. Gingrich was reelected speaker just two weeks ago in a close vote in which a few of his own party members deserted him. He is the third-highest elected official of the United States after the president and vice president.

"This penalty is tough and unprecedented. It is also appropriate," Republican Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, chairman of the Ethics Committee which recommended the punishment, said in the debate. "No one is above the rules of the House of Representatives," she said.

Several Republicans called for harsher punishment. Mr. Gingrich is required to make towards the cost of the committee investigation. Some suggested it set a precedent for assessing costs against members making frivolous ethics complaints.

The committee found that Mr. Gingrich brought discredit on the House by pro-

viding false information about a politically oriented college course he taught that was financed by tax-exempt charitable contributions, and by failing to seek legal advice to ensure he was in compliance with tax laws.

Ms. Johnson said the inquiry had proceeded "against a backdrop of harsh political warfare."

She expressed hope the vote would end "the crippling partisanship and animosity that has surrounded us."

But the bitterness was mostly masked in a debate in which both sides seemed eager to reach closure. They had been warned against personal attacks in an opening statement by the president member, Republican Representative Doug Bereuter of Nebraska.

President Bill Clinton, who is urging a more civil tone in politics for his second term, said the impact of the Gingrich vote would depend on how others reacted to it. "I think that ... the House should do its business, and then we should get back to the people's business," he told reporters.

Mr. Gingrich left Washington Tuesday to take part in a House Republican "retreat" in Virginia. His office said he was due back in Washington Thursday and would then leave for Georgia.

When the committee formally issued its charges last December, Mr. Gingrich admitted them with "deep sadness." He thus avoided a "trial" by the House and left the committee only to decide the penalty. He agreed with the committee's decision.

Republicans still back him but the vote raised questions as to whether he would last the two years of his speakership.

A reprimand does not require him to step down.

But a report by the committee's special counsel, James Cole, said his offences were of a category between a reprimand and the censure that would have almost surely forced him out.

Committee member Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, said Mr. Gingrich was "technically eligible" to continue as speaker. "I hope he will make a judgment as to whether he is ethically fit," she added.

Mr. Gingrich's most persistent critic, Rep. David Bonior, D-Michigan, said it was up to Republicans "to decide whether this is the kind of person they want to be their leader."

Mr. Bonior indicated he would take a lower profile on Mr. Gingrich following the House action.

"I think that to a large extent the role that we had in the speaker's case has moved now to another level, and that is to the IRS and perhaps the justice department," he told reporters.

The Ethics Committee has said that documents in the case will be available to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Republican Connie Morella, of Maryland, told reporters: "Newt has a lot to offer in terms of intelligence and in terms of vision. Now he's going to have to reestablish credibility. There's no doubt about it."

Representative John Boehner, of Ohio, a member of the Republican leadership team, said the House would now turn to the legislative agenda and "every day that goes by, he (Gingrich) strengthens himself."

During the debate, Representative Ben Cardin of Maryland, the senior Democrat on the investigating panel, cited earlier rules violations and conduct by the speaker that brought Ethics Committee rebukes.

Fighting erupts in north; jets bomb Kabul airport

KABUL (AFP) — Heavy fighting broke out between the Taliban militia and its rivals north of Kabul Wednesday after opposition jets repeatedly bombed the capital's airport, residents and airport officials said.

The sky above the Afghan capital was lit with anti-aircraft fire from various hill tops inside the city. Big columns of smoke could be seen engulfing the airport area, witnesses said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

"Very heavy fighting has started between the rival factions outside Charikar," a town which lies 64 kilometres north of Kabul, a source said.

It was not immediately clear who launched the offensive or whether there had been any change in the frontlines in the area where the Taliban are facing off against forces of the country's anti-Taliban coalition.

The latest round of fighting erupted as jets belonging to the alliance dropped at least eight bombs on the capital's airport in three sorties late Tuesday.

Witnesses said the bombs landed on the airport's apron area and on an unused terminal at its eastern flank, leaving big craters which were being repaired by airport workers.

Airport officials told AFP that an engineer, identified only as Gul Jan, was wounded, but the runway remained undamaged. There were no civilian casualties, doctors at two major hospitals here said.

Charikar was captured by the Taliban last week following an offensive on forces loyal to ex-government forces Commander Ahmad Shah Masood. Residents have been leaving the city since the Taliban told residents living near the frontline to leave for their own safety.

Sources said the night air raids were the heaviest since the Taliban militia scored major territorial gains, including the capture of the key Bagram Air Base, 50 kilometres north of Kabul, from Mr. Masood's forces last week.

The Taliban seized Kabul on Sept. 27 last year, sending ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his troops fleeing to the north. Mr. Rabbani has since joined in an alliance with Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum and other forces to fight the Taliban.

Meanwhile, thousands of Afghan civilians fled their homes north of Kabul Tuesday, saying the Taliban militia who recaptured the town of Charikar had ordered them to leave, witnesses said.

Through a loudspeaker, Taliban ordered all the civilians to leave Charikar and we started packing and collecting what we could carry," said Shah Ghazi, a primary school teacher. Observers believe the civilians have been ordered out for fear they will rebel and attack Taliban forces.

With their small belongings, the road down to Kabul was dotted with women, children and elderly. Some were ferried in trucks laden with people, some covering their faces with plastic sheeting against the extreme cold.

No immediate comment was available from leaders of the Taliban militia, who have said they were determined to disarm civilians in the town of Charikar and other recaptured villages.

A Taliban spokesman said earlier they had not ordered people in the newly captured area to leave.

"We have known our enemy now and need to disarm them, and if not they will ambush us again," said a Taliban frontline commander early this week.

South Korea's strike through the streets

Trade Union left the new labour law was

Renewed

SEOUL (AFP) — Thousands of South Korean workers went back to work Wednesday to renew attempts to force the government to repeal a controversial labour law.

Union leaders called for a strike for the first time in months to mark the anniversary of the 1987 constitution, but the strike was dimmed by the end of the crisis.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), an umbrella group that has spearheaded industrial unrest, said 150,000 workers walked out. The labour ministry said 65,000 workers had joined.

Unions went ahead with strikes despite an attempt by President Kim Young-sam to end the conflict by ordering parliament to suspend the law, which makes it easier for employers to lay off workers and suspend arrest warrants against union leaders.

Leaders of the KCTU led a march in Seoul by 3,000 workers to the accompaniment of beating drums and go-

N. Kore

SEOUL (R) — Two Korean families, including a distant relative of the late President Kim Il-Sung, defected to South Korea by sea in the winter temperatures Wednesday.

Among the eight was Young-Jin, a relative of the late president, who said a statement from the Agency for National Security Planning, South Korea's spy agency, said: "Kim died in mid-1994, his son Kim Jong-Il, the nation's leader, has yet to assume the two posts of state president and general secretary of the Workers' Party."

The agency said the families of four South Korean political asylum after crossing the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean peninsula.

The eight, including children, were rescued by South Korean marines and later arrived in Seoul.

They said they were fleeing North Korea because of political persecution and economic hardship.

"I don't want to tell that we are about to have a breakthrough but it is in progress," Mr. Young-Jin told reporters. "We have been waiting for nearly three hours for a dinner at the palace."

"We made some progress today and I hope tomorrow (Wednesday) will have some further developments," Mr. Young-Jin said. He said he raised issues such as human rights and political prisoners with Mr. Castro, but did not

get a response. He said he was in Cuba for two days and met with Fidel Castro Tuesday and said Canada was making some progress in its dialogue with Cuba.

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Fighting erupts in north; jets bomb Kabul airport

KABUL (AP) — Helicopters broke between the Taliban militia and a rival north of Kabul Tuesday after opposing forces repeatedly bombed the capital's airport, roads and other targets.

The sky above the city was filled with the sound of anti-aircraft fire from the Taliban as they fought off a series of attacks by the northern forces.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

A heavy fighting started between the Taliban and the northern forces outside the city of Kabul, which has been the capital since the fall of the communist regime in 1992.

It was not immediately clear who launched the offensive or whether it had been any change in the frontlines in the area.

The Taliban are fighting against forces of the Northern Alliance, a coalition of anti-Taliban forces.

The latest round of fighting erupted in the north, about 100 km from the capital's airport in the south.

Witnesses said the Taliban fired on the airport, but it was not clear if any aircraft were damaged.

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South Korea's strike leader Kwon Young-Kil (right) is greeted by his supporters as he leads a protest march through the streets of Seoul Tuesday. Mr. Kwon and several deputies of the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Union left the Myongdong Cathedral where they had sought sanctuary from arrest for the first time since a new labour law was rammed through parliament last December (Reuter photo)

Renewed strikes hit S. Korea as settlement hopes fade

SEOUL (AFP) — Thousands of South Korean workers went back on strike Wednesday to renew attempts to force the government to repeal a contested labour law.

Union leaders emerged from Myongdong Cathedral for the first time in a month to lead a protest march in Seoul, but political wrangling dimmed hopes of ending the crisis.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), an umbrella group that has spearheaded the industrial unrest, said 180,000 workers had walked out. The labour ministry said 65,000 workers downed tools.

Unions went ahead with strikes despite an attempt by President Kim Young Sam to end the conflict by agreeing to parliament taking a second look at the law which makes it easier for firms to lay off workers. He also suspended arrest warrants against union leaders.

Leaders of the outlawed KCTU led a march in central Seoul by 3,000 workers to the accompaniment of beating drums and gongs.

"Victory is imminent — down with Kim Young Sam" shouted the marchers, accompanied by traditional folk dancers.

Riot police stood by as the march progressed along Chongro Boulevard, led by Kwon Young-Kil and other KCTU leaders.

KCTU leaders sought sanctuary in Myongdong Cathedral after strikes erupted in response to the law forced through parliament on Dec. 26.

Around 1,300 riot police lifted their cordon around the church late Tuesday after the warrants were suspended.

Unions spurned the president's offer for parliament to amend the law and have called strikes every Wednesday and demonstrations every Saturday. The KCTU said it would call its half-million members out on a new indefinite general strike unless the government repeals the law by Feb. 18.

"We will go ahead with our plans for strikes and rallies unless the new labour law is totally nullified," said the KCTU head.

Major industries hit by the

one-day strike included South Korea's largest automaker, Hyundai Motor Co., auto parts giant Mando Machinery Co. and military-tank producer Hyundai Precision.

Unions at Daewoo Motor Co., KIA Motors Co. and Asia Motors Co. staged a half-day walkout and many other heavy industry firms and shipyards were crippled by partial or all-out strikes.

The new strike came as no clear signs emerged of rival political parties sitting down for talks.

Hailing the president's move as a "major concession," the ruling New Korea Party (NKP) urged opposition parties to come to a meeting of senior officials to end the crisis and bring the national assembly back into session.

But the opposition said the NKP should first promise to nullify the labour law, and another that gives the secret service greater power. They insisted the ruling party should admit the laws were passed illegally before talks could be started.

The opposition position

received support from a delegation of international trade unionists.

Bill Jordan, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) said the delegation had been "encouraged" by the government proposals.

"But we do believe that the crisis could be removed at a stroke by the nullification of the laws," he said.

The strike came as diplomats in Paris predicted the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) would censure Seoul for the law, which the OECD's trade union advisory board has branded "retrogressive."

The law as it stands makes it easier for management to fire workers and extend their hours, and bans more than one union at each company until 2000.

South Korea's ruling party pushed the law through parliament in a pre-dawn session on Dec. 26 in the absence of the opposition, triggering instant nationwide strikes.

Serb court gives town to Socialists, France protests police beatings

BELGRADE (AP) — President Slobodan Milosevic's Socialists have claimed victory in another Serbian town, using the courts to grab what they lost at the polls.

The opposition insists that Mr. Milosevic accept its Nov. 17 municipal election triumphs in Belgrade and 13 other key cities and has vowed to continue protests until he gives in.

But, in its second ruling favouring the Socialists in as many days, Serbia's Supreme Court said Tuesday that Mr. Milosevic's Socialists won Smederevska Palanka, about 80 kilometres southeast of Belgrade.

The ruling lessened chances that Mr. Milosevic would give up Belgrade or any other town beyond the five his party already has conceded, even though an international fact-finding mission confirmed all 14 opposition vic-

tories.

On Monday, the Supreme Court, believed to be controlled by the government, ruled in favour of the Socialists in the northwestern town of Sabac.

With such legal manoeuvring expected to draw out the crisis for weeks, Mr. Milosevic is clearly hoping to wear down both domestic and foreign resistance to his claim on town halls across Serbia.

Protests continued Tuesday, with taxi drivers joining in for the first time. More than 100 horn-blasting cabs drove through downtown Belgrade. They were greeted by protesting students preparing to spend their third night in the streets in a bid to oust riot police preventing them from marching.

Ending weeks of relative restraint in 62 consecutive

days of protests, police waded into crowds Monday evening swinging batons and beating demonstrators in at least three Belgrade neighbourhoods.

Independent B 92 Radio reported several people asking for help in Belgrade hospitals, including a young man with serious head injuries. A student heading to join a downtown protest was arrested, the radio said.

France protested the police brutality and Mr. Milosevic's delaying tactics.

"We strongly deplore the violence that was committed last night," said a French Foreign Ministry statement.

"These recent incidents cause us even more concern as they appear to show the Serb government resorting to judicial quibbles" as a way of delaying recognition of the opposition triumphs, it said.

The Telegraph daily, quoting

sources close to the government, reported Tuesday that Mr. Milosevic would declare emergency rule in Belgrade and call for new elections in the capital instead of conceding his Socialists' defeat.

Despite the grim prospects of another night in the cold, the students kept their sense of humour.

Some donated blood at a local collection centre, explaining that they were hoping to hasten the departure of leading Socialist Party officials who have vowed not to give in without bloodshed.

"Milosevic is playing a game of chess with his people," opposition leader Zoran Djindjic told a rally of more than 15,000 people. "He has lost this game. But he is banking on time, and he will wait until the very last moment."

24 people killed in northern Rwanda

KIGALI (R) — Gunmen killed 24 people in northwestern Rwanda two days after Hutu militiamen killed three Spanish aid workers in the same region, state radio said Tuesday night.

The radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said unidentified gunmen killed the 24 on Monday night in Nyamagali commune in Ruhengeri prefecture. Security forces started a search for the attackers.

Hutu militiamen suspected to have returned to Rwanda from Zaire among more than 700,000 refugees last year shot dead three Spanish aid workers from Medicos del Mundo (Doctors of the World) Saturday night in the northwestern town of Ruhengeri.

The bodies of the three were flown in coffins Tuesday from the Rwandan capital Kigali to Nairobi, Kenya, where officials said they would later be transferred to a flight on to Europe.

U.N. and other aid agencies reiterated Tuesday they would not close down their humanitarian programmes in the Ruhengeri and Gisenyi areas of the northwest because of the killings.

But they said security in the northwest would be tightened after talks with representatives of the Rwandan government.

Three Rwandan soldiers were also killed in the attack and an American was shot in one of his legs which was later amputated.

Gunmen stormed a house where the aid workers were staying and demanded their passports before shooting the three Spaniards at close range.

The American was shot as he dived under a table.

The killers were said by Rwandan military sources to have belonged to the Hutu Interahamwe militia which played a leading role in the 1994 slaughter of 800,000 Rwandans, mostly minority Tutsis, before being driven into Zaire by Tutsi rebels.

A series of attacks have been reported this month in Rwanda on survivors of the genocide, apparently aimed at stopping them from testifying at trials of suspects accused of involvement in the mass slaughter.

Diplomats at the United Nations in New York said Tuesday that Algerian diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun, who once headed the U.N. operation in Somalia, would be named as a special representative for the Great Lakes region of Central Africa including Rwanda.

They said he would jointly represent both the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity.

Zaire rebels take another town

KAMPALA (AP) — Uganda rebels have captured the northern town of Mahagi, near the Ugandan border, expanding rebel-held territory northwards as the Zairian government announced a general offensive against the rebels in eastern Zaire.

The government-owned New Vision newspaper Tuesday quoted church officials and travellers as saying rebels from the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation had captured Mahagi, 15 kilometres from the Ugandan border, without resistance on Jan. 16.

The latest unconfirmed victory would expand the

territory held by rebels to a 700-kilometre strip of eastern Zaire stretching along the Burundian, Rwandan and Ugandan borders.

The rebels began fighting to overthrow the regime of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko in September 1996.

On Monday Zairian Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo formally declared war on the rebels and ordered a "massive" counter-offensive to take back lost territory.

Foreign mercenaries have been training Zairian troops in Kisangani, 300 kilometres from the frontlines, but there have been no reports of new fighting.

Church officials on the Ugandan side of the border near Mahagi told the New Vision that residents cheered the arrival of the alliance forces. Zairian troops have left a wake of destruction in their path as they have retreated ahead of the advancing rebels.

The rebel capture of Mahagi has also displaced Ugandan rebels of the West Nile Bank Front, who used the town to launch attacks on northern Uganda. Ugandan officers and troops have fought with the rebels in the past, but there was no indication Ugandan forces had fought for Mahagi, located at the northern end of Lake Albert.

Australian bushfires force hundreds to flee, leave 3 dead

MELBOURNE (AFP) — The worst bushfires to hit the eastern Australian state of Victoria in more than a decade have killed three people, destroyed dozens of homes and forced hundreds of people to flee.

The bodies of three people, including a couple believed to be in their twenties, were found Wednesday in the charred ruins of a house at Ferry Creek in the Dandenong ranges on Melbourne's eastern fringes, state police said.

Fire authorities said they believed the young couple died after taking refuge in the cellar of their burning home, one of about 40 destroyed in the area, which was the worst hit by the blazes.

The age and sex of the third victim had not been established, a police spokeswoman said, although police had said earlier they were searching for a woman in her fifties.

Police said they were amazed more lives were not lost in the fires, revealing that many people refused to leave their homes, although almost 1,000 fled as the

bushfire bore down on them. Authorities said the bushfires were the worst in the state since the 1983 Ash Wednesday disaster in which 47 people died.

The fires were fuelled by the same searing summer temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius which hit players in the Australian Open Tennis Tournament in Melbourne.

Police spokesman Kevin Loomes said police were investigating reports that the fires were the work of an arsonist and that arson squad detectives had visited the house where the three people died. "The possibility that they may have been deliberately lit will be taken into account," Mr. Loomes said.

"But at this stage nothing has been confirmed." The fires were brought back under control Wednesday after light rain fell on eastern Melbourne and the firefighting effort was scaled back after midnight, fire authorities said.

Rain had helped in "blacking-out" some of the fires, country Fire Authority operations manager Mark

Glover said.

Seven aircraft including six water bombers and thousands of firefighters were involved in the emergency. Two Canadian superscooper firebombing aircraft flew from Adelaide in the neighbouring state of South Australia to help fight fires in the Dandenongs and the Mornington peninsula south of Melbourne.

One of the other aircraft was a reconnaissance which provided infra-red scans showing the danger spots as six others dropped fire-retardant foam.

Prime Minister John Howard Thursday thanked the volunteers and firefighters who he said had risked great personal danger.

Mr. Howard said he, along with all other Australians, was distressed about the loss of life and homes and that disaster relief would be available to people affected by the fires.

"It's always a terrifying thing to have your home burnt before your eyes," he said in a television interview. "... I hope the rain this morning will give relief."

N. Korean leader's kin, others defect to south

SEOUL (R) — Two North Korean families, including a distant relative of the Stalinist state's late President Kim Il-Sung, defected to South Korea by sea in freezing winter temperatures Wednesday.

Among the eight was Kim Young-Jin, a relative by marriage to Kim Il-Sung's wife, a statement from the Agency for National Security Planning, South Korea's spycatcher, said.

Kim died in mid-1994 and his son Kim Jong-Il leads the nation although he has yet to assume the two key posts of state president and general-secretary of the ruling Workers Party.

The agency said the two families of four sought political asylum after entering southern waters in the Yellow Sea between China and the Korean peninsula.

The eight, including five children, were rescued by South Korean maritime police and later arrived at

the port of Incheon, just west of Seoul.

Live television footage showed the defectors stepping out of a Russian-made police helicopter aided by police officers.

The North Koreans, wearing winter parkas, waved at waiting photographers, saying repeatedly "thank you, thank you." The agency did not give any further details, but Yonhap Television news reported they made the journey in freezing winter conditions in a small boat.

"It appears that they first fled North Korea to China and came to South Korea," the television said.

An increasing number of North Koreans have fled the hermit nation and sought asylum in the south following several years of chronic food shortages.

Last month, a family of 16 and a security guard, the largest group of North Korean defectors since the 1950-53 Korean war, arrived in Seoul six weeks after launching an epic escape down the length of China and Hong Kong.

The 17 later told a news conference that the impoverished north had nearly tripled the guards along its borders with China and Russia to stop escapes.

The recent rise in defections has been a propaganda coup for South Korea but has also sparked fears about how Seoul would cope if the trend turned into a tide of refugees from the north, which is struggling to survive the effects of severe floods in the past two years and industrial collapse.

The South Korean government is drawing up plans for reception centres for North Koreans — half-way houses that will offer immediate shelter and vocational training — and the first could be ready soon.

Earlier this month, South Korean President Kim Young-Sam urged Pyongyang to drop its bellicose stance against Seoul and join peace talks with South Korea, the united states and China.

He said last September's submarine incursion into southern waters showed North Korea had not abandoned its dream of unifying Korea under communism.

The peninsula was divided at the end of World War II.

North Korea has agreed to attend a preparatory briefing next week on the four-nation peace talks jointly proposed by Kim Young-Sam and U.S. President Bill Clinton last year.

The briefing will be by U.S. and South Korean officials. The session is designed to pave the way for talks aimed at replacing the truce that ended the Korean war with a peace mechanism.

The move is part of growing contacts between North Korea and the West after Pyongyang apologised for the submarine incident on Dec. 29.

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Canadian foreign minister meets Cuba's Castro

HAVANA (R) — Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy met Cuban President Fidel Castro Tuesday and said Canada was making some progress in its policy of dialogue with Cuban officials.

"I don't want to tell you that we are about to have a great breakthrough but it's a work in progress," Mr. Axworthy told reporters late Tuesday after meeting Castro for nearly three hours over dinner at the palace of the revolution.

"We've made some progress today and I hope by tomorrow (Wednesday) we will have some further developments," Mr. Axworthy said. He said he raised issues such as human rights and political prisoners with Mr. Castro, but did not give

details.

Mr. Axworthy, accompanied by Secretary of State for Africa and Latin America Christine Stewart, arrived Tuesday afternoon for a 24-hour trip, the highest level visit to the Communist-ruled island by a Canadian official in two decades.

The visit has highlighted Ottawa's difference with Washington over Cuba policy and ruffled some feathers in the United States.

Canada believes it can best encourage political and economic reform on the island through constructive engagement.

The United States has long sought to isolate Cuba and last year toughened its 35-year-old economic embargo on Cuba with its Helms-Burton law, which

includes provisions to punish some third country firms doing business with Cuba. Ottawa has been a leading opponent of the law.

The Canadian minister, who described his session with Mr. Castro as "cordial, very open and sometimes very amusing," stressed that the current talks were part of ongoing dialogue with Cuban officials.

He said the process "does demonstrate that you can talk to the Cubans and they're prepared to talk to you, as long as you come in a pretty straight forward way and not hectoring."

"We have established confidence, some trust, some respect, and now I think that's translating into some serious dialogue about how we can work together," added Mr. Axworthy, who earlier Tuesday held talks with his Cuban counterpart Roberto Robaina.

Mr. Axworthy did not mention it, but he was working during his visit on a joint declaration for future cooperation on a range of areas that were expected to include several steps in the area of human rights and governance.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters Tuesday that Canada was rewarding Mr. Castro by sending its foreign minister to visit with him.

"It doesn't make sense to reward a dictator in our own hemisphere who's completely behind the times," Mr. Burns said.

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"It doesn't make sense to reward a dictator in our own hemisphere who's completely behind the times," Mr. Burns said.

London issues strong protest to China over Hong Kong

LONDON (AFP) — Britain Wednesday underscored its concern for Hong Kong's future after the July handover to China by summoning Chinese Ambassador Jiang Enshu for a "strong" protest against Beijing's latest assault on democracy in the colony.

But while highlighting British concern, the meeting between the ambassador and Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Hanley, announced Tuesday and scheduled for late Wednesday, was also seen as a sign of London's powerlessness to influence events after July.

A legal sub-group of the Preparatory Committee, a Chinese-appointed panel supervising the handover, last Sunday recommended in Beijing the abolition of 16 Hong Kong laws and amendments to nine others.

The laws include three ar-

ticles of the 1991 Bill of Rights ordinance, which sets out civil liberties in Hong Kong. The Bill of Rights has particularly angered Beijing as it was promulgated by the colony's British-ruled government after London had already agreed to return Hong Kong to China.

The meeting Wednesday would make clear to the ambassador, said a Foreign Office spokesman, that Britain sees China's latest proposals as "totally unjustified and unnecessary."

The proposals, said the spokesman, were an attempt "to repeal or water down laws in line with the basic law" which is to serve as the constitution of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) which Hong Kong will become after it returns to Chinese sovereignty at midnight on June

30.

China's actions are "in the interests of no one," said the Foreign Office. They are sending "the wrong signal" and will "undermine confidence in Hong Kong."

Mr. Hanley, a junior minister in charge of Hong Kong, was seeing the ambassador while Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind was in Madrid for talks aimed at ironing over problems concerning Gibraltar, the British colony over which Spain claims sovereignty.

The summoning of the Chinese ambassador represented a heightened level of British protest over Hong Kong from the comments and observations delivered to Beijing at more or less regular intervals in the recent countdown to the handover that will end 150 years of colonisation.

How high must one jump

By Jean-Claude Elias

COMMERCIAL considerations, fashion and hip-hop trends aside, one buys a PC to do something with it. Understand to play, to type, to calculate, and so forth. In spite of the multi-purpose vocation of new machines, different configurations (the set of components that make a computer system and that one can choose) lead to different usage. If a document scanner is not an item you may need then don't buy it. Not only will you save money but you will also spare yourself the trouble of learning how to operate it. If 16MB of memory is all that is required to run your accounting programme properly — the real reason why you got the PC in first place — then don't spend a dinar on 32MB even if your best friend, the so-called, the self-proclaimed computer expert advises you to do it.

How powerful must your computer be? Unfortunately there isn't a simple answer to such a question. The only scientific, pragmatic approach requires the help of a consultant who would eventually undertake an analysis study of your needs before giving you the ideal configuration. You could also browse through a PC magazine and order the latest model. Though this approach will probably make you spend more than you were prepared for, you will end with an excellent general-use machine. Both methods are not perfect, the consultant may be too expensive to hire and the magazine may lead you to purchase more than what you need.

There is, however, a simple, though not absolute, rule that can help to evaluate the processing power a PC must have, this depending on one's needs. It consists of defining a scale by which the main type of programmes are measured. We'll give it from simplest to most complex. The type that requires minimum power is the text-oriented type of software. Typically this is word processing. In second position comes the number-cruncher or calculation type and the general business and data base programmes. In third position we find MIDI music software, based on synthesizers. In fourth position we place graphic applications — still drawings and pictures, without animation — along with Internet access types, engineering graphics and

chip talk



desktop publishing. In fifth the digital audio for digital recording, editing and playback and finally, in sixth position, the most demanding of them all, graphic animation and live video applications.

This is of course a general indication, a guideline to which there are, as always, exceptions. A number-cruncher (complex mathematics) application software in a university scientific research centre may require faster machines than graphic animation for example. Also, power here is taken as an average between microprocessor power, memory and hard disk capacity. The above classification can help a newcomer to the world of PCs find his or her way and avoid dramatic errors.

There are also some misconceptions that still confuse people. For example, don't trust those who tell you that a home PC doesn't have to be as powerful as an office computer dedicated to "serious" business applications. Nothing could be more wrong. Today's CD-ROM based advanced games are much more sophisticated, technically speaking, than even the best word processing or accounting software, and therefore require unusually powerful machines. No criteria exists that says a home machine should be cheaper or not as performing as a business model. There are numerous cases where it is actually the opposite. Because one buys a home computer precisely to satisfy the different needs of different people — the parents, the children — it must usually be more versatile, faster than the average office PC.

JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, January 23, 1997

1:00	Holy Koran	5:30	One
1:05	Min Al Hadi Al Mohammadi	6:00	You Bet Your Life
1:30	Cartoon (Ovide & The Gang) # Iris		French Programme
2:00	French Programmes	7:00	Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
2:30	They Came From Outer Space	7:15	Le Journal
3:00	Feature Film — Sea Dragon	7:30	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
	Starring: Graham McGrath & Pat Roach	7:35	News Headlines
4:50	Call For Prayer And Iftar Link With Channel One	8:00	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
		8:30	Oriental Rugs
5:30	French Programmes	9:10	Babylon-5
	Intertainment Varieties	9:10	Tycoons (Documentary)
7:00	Le Journal	10:00	News In English
7:15	Magazine — Atomes Crochus	10:25	Islam In A Changing World (Doc.)
7:30	News Headlines	11:00	Hot Shots
7:35	Parenthood	11:50	False Arrest
8:00	Islam In The West	1:15	Ramadan Talks
8:30	Babylon-5		
9:10	Kung Fu-The Legend Continues		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Islam In A Changing World		
11:00	Feature Film — The Wrong Guys		
	Starring: Louie Anderson & Richard Lewis		
11:50	Mini Series — False Arrest		
1:05	Ramadan Talks		

Friday, January 24, 1997

1:00	Holy Koran	5:30	One
1:05	Min Al Hadi Al Mohammadi	6:00	You Bet Your Life
1:30	Flintstones And Playabout		French Programme
2:00	French Programme	7:30	Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
2:30	Crystal Maze	7:35	News Headlines
3:00	Disorganised Crime — Feature Film	8:00	Rosanne
	Starring: Hoyt Axton & Corbin Berlsen	8:30	Documentary
4:50	Call For Prayer And Iftar Link With Channel One	9:10	Babylon 5
		9:10	Extreme (Pilot)
5:30	French Programme	10:00	News In English
	Science & Space Encyclopedia	10:25	Journey Across The Land Of Islam
7:00	Le Journal	11:00	Under Suspicion
7:15	Magazine — Allo La Terre	11:50	Mini Series
7:30	News Headlines	1:05	Ramadan Talks
7:35	Down To Earth		
8:02	Oriental Rugs (Doc.)		
8:30	Babylon 5		
9:10	Hunter		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Dark Horse — Feature Film		
	Starring: Mimi Rogers & Ed Begley		
11:50	Mini Series — False Arrest		
1:05	Ramadan Talks		

Saturday, January 25, 1997

1:00	Holy Koran	5:30	One
1:05	Min Al Hadi Al Mohammadi	6:00	You Bet Your Life
1:35	Cartoon		French Programme
2:30	Chris Cross	6:15	Magazine — Extra Large
3:00	Feature Film — Past The Bleachers	7:30	News Headlines
4:50	Call For Prayer And Iftar Link With Channel One	7:35	Murphy Brown
		8:02	Oriental Rugs
5:05	Documentary	8:30	Encounter
5:30	The Muppet Show	9:10	Lost Civilisations (Doc.)
6:00	French Programme	10:00	News In English
	Series — Jack	10:25	Islam In A Changing World (Doc.)
7:00	Le Journal	11:00	Snowy River
7:15	Magazine — Ziva	11:50	Mini Series — Memories Of Midnight
7:30	News Headlines	1:05	Ramadan Talks
7:35	Hanging With Mr. Cooper		
8:02	Oriental Rugs (Doc.)		
8:30	Prism		
9:10	Documentary		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Lois & Clark — The New Adventures Of Superman		
11:00	Journey Across The Land Of Islam		
11:50	MacGyver		
12:00	Feature Film — The Wild Rovers		
	Starring: William Holden & Ryan O'Neal		
1:05	Ramadan Talks		

Sunday, January 26, 1997

1:00	Holy Koran	5:30	One
1:05	Min Al Hadi Al Mohammadi	6:00	You Bet Your Life
1:30	Cartoon		French Programme
2:00	French Programmes	6:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
2:30	The Famous Five	7:30	News Headlines
3:00	Feature Film — The Young Adventurers	7:35	Baker's Field P.D.
	Starring: Marc Marut & Mathieu Kermoyan	8:00	Documentary
4:50	Call For Prayer And Iftar Link With Channel	8:30	Challenges
		9:00	N.B.A. Basketball
		10:00	News In English
		10:25	Journey Across The Land Of Islam
		11:00	Cobra
		11:50	Mini Series — Memories Of Midnight
		1:15	Ramadan Talks

Are you an average person?

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

IF YOU are one, then please wait in line while we do a quick reality check to see how the four million people with whom we share this land are doing.

We think that they are not doing as well as the statisticians would have us believe.

An even quicker check will show that the downturn is becoming the rule rather than the exception. The examples that help to illustrate this point are plenty and are living proofs of a suffering that screams right in the face of those who like to dazzle the public with figures while they themselves are tucked away in the warm habitats of their villas.

There is no easier way to put this because a quick glance at the streets of Amman will be sufficient to show that Jordanians are not exaggerating their state of economic uneasiness and are certainly not in need of therapy as some would claim because this state is definitely not a delusional one. It is a reality. It is a sad reality.

Another exaggeration of our state of well being comes in the form statements made by foreign officials about how well Jordan is doing. Such statements have to be understood as what they really are and that is no more than passing remarks intended for public consumption, and therefore, public appeasement.

Our concern in all of this should focus on the average man and woman on the street who are in so many occasions to blame and at many other occasions the victims. They are to blame because they drive around the streets at around 5:00 p.m. like lunatics because of an anxiety that has to do with either losing or gaining their share of an awaiting feast. A feast for the sake of which such people do not mind sacrificing one human life, two human lives, or even three.

However, these average persons are victims when they find themselves obliged to deal with a generation of young people raised by babysitters brought over from Asian states.

These are the same kids who borrow daddy's officially registered vehicle along with the accompanying mobile phone and insist on taking both along with them to the heart of their university campus. And what does daddy have to say about all of this? Nothing, as far as the average on-looker can tell.

These are the same kids whose Hondas and four-wheel drive cars annoy the average residents of apartment blocks and take over their street-side parking space because these poor sods have no in-house parking. They do not have any because the original owner of that same building, and in collusion with a municipal officer, has wavered their right to a parking space in favour of more flats, and therefore more money.

Meanwhile, the parents of our young pretenders are out somewhere either playing cards — Bridge seems to have become a favourite Jordanian pastime — or having dinner at the house of another person of the same social circle as themselves who, in turn, cares very little about where his kids spend their time or what kind of company they keep.

This brings us to another topic that has to do with people being able to go out at night, or not go out, especially now during Ramadan, to spend time with family and friends at those places around town that have prepared fes-



tive atmospheres. This year, strangely enough, there seems to be far less people venturing out of their homes. Maybe because even fun has become a luxury? Not for us to say. But someone could go out and conduct a survey to collect the data needed to prepare the necessary charts to dazzle those fascinated with numbers.

Anyway, what we are able to ascertain is that you are able to enjoy yourself if you can afford a price tag of \$49.95 per person per night.

In light of so many contradictions, maybe even hypocrisy, it is quite acceptable, even encouraged, to be able to read some tabloids and newspapers that speak the language of the average person who has never been to Abdoun but who may have heard about how two famous families are at each other's throats because a son of one had insulted a son of another at the latter's restaurant.

This average person on the street may also have heard about how fights keep breaking out at the parties of the rich and famous because someone having far more fun than that which was acceptable had made a pass at another's girlfriend or relation.

But a strong showing of tribal affiliation is always welcome. Or is it?

This average person vaguely remembers also hearing about the grandson of a famous statesman having drawn his gun on the streets of Abdoun because he had thought he could have used it to solve problems.

In any case, grand-dad would be there to get him off the hook. Or would he?

This poor average person may also have suffered the abuse of watching television talk shows in English where the guests struggle not to fall asleep on stage or others in Arabic where the host talks far more than the guest.

Our average guy, or gal, may have wished that such mockeries would come to a halt but he or she would have been too smart to have thought that. Our guys, you see, know very well that the opportunities to host such shows and to do some very good things will hardly come the way of people of their standing unless they were prepared to act because there will always be someone who is a son of fulan or the daughter-in-law of fulan that will get there way before they do.

And this is why it is definitely not funny when a satirical headline in a tabloid from the future reads that the son of fulan — who is now a mere 13-year-old — has been nominated to a top job just like his dad before him, because this is how it works: You scratch my back and I will give you a rub. And this is the saddest reality of them all.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

LAUGH-IT-OFF

4. What is meant by "in the arms of Morpheus"?

• "SAY, I saw you running the avenue the other morning," said Mr. Grogan's neighbour, "were you trying to catch a bus?"
"No," replied Grogan, "I was running to stop a fight."
"A fight, eh? I didn't hear anything about that. Who was fighting?"
"Mulligan."
"Mulligan, eh? Who was he fighting?"
"Me."

• MANAGER: "Why did you apply for the job of house detective? You have only one eye."
APPLICANT: "That's all I need to look through key-holes."

• FIRST HUNTER: "I'll bet you don't get the rabbit."
SECOND HUNTER: "What makes you think I won't?"
FIRST HUNTER: "Your gun ain't loaded."
SECOND HUNTER: "That's all right. The rabbit doesn't know that."

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

• Lots of people think so.
Katheer minan' nas ya'takidoona thaalek.
• I haven't time to rest.
Laysa endi waqt ler'raha.
• Don't put all the blame on me.
La tada kollal-lawm alayy.
• I've lost weight.
Laqad khaffa wazni.
• I admire your hospitality.
Enni mu'jab bekaramek.
• She's the queen of my heart.
Ennaha malikatu qalbi.
• I like him and he likes me.
Ana ohibbohu wahwa yohibboni.
• Try to understand me.
Haawell an taf'hamani.
• You're wasting your time.
Ennaka todee'u waqtak.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What is an understudy?
2. What is the "pit" of a theatre?
3. What is a "call-boy"?

PARTY GAMES

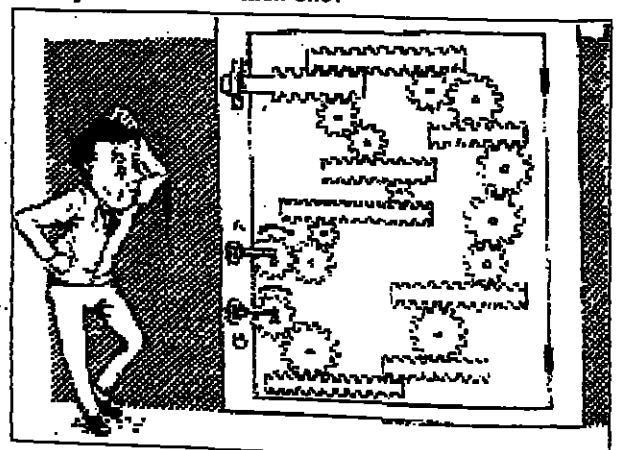
FIND THE CITY

THIS is a simple jumbled-letter game. Each player is given a list of, say, ten or fifteen places with their letters all jumbled up. They are given, say, ten minutes to try to find the actual names of the places or write them down alongside the jumbled letters. Here are two examples: RRHOWA, when rearranged becomes HARROW and EEARMCHNST becomes MANCHESTER.
Below are given more examples from which a selection can be made:
(1) SOBNOT (2) MORE (3) LLPOOERVI (4) MANAM (5) NEDA

PUZZLES

LOCK PROBLEM

(A) ONLY ONE of the keys will open the safe. Can you work out which one?



(B) PICTURE QUIZ

Can you identify the object below? Clue: It begins with the letter "C".



Disno

By Marilyn Aug
The Associated P

PARIS — Never the happy ending an torical inaccu Never mind that Hugo as a gro monstrously, is formed into a funn king fellow with a of gold.

In the land where began, Disney's H buck Of Notre Dam hit.

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IFHRAN (AFP) — rning Shi'ite Muslim c are seeking to turn national cinema into a tool to promote "sacred" values of the Islamic Revolution. Iran's culture and Isl guidance Ministry o sed a seminar with the of Religious Cinema e this month to try to en



High

A MIXTURE of fizz, fan up the winning cocktail show Week has become the latest one heralding in no exception. But among the fabulous the retro, one particular c is modern, yet with a wearable simplicity. It came from husband a ly Nam, a new name in t who made their London d Fabrics are a top pri Nian and it is mainly the designs their futurist emphasis is put on the n textiles, with insistence a

By Angela Tan
Reporter

SINGAPORE — After tal the world of haute co line by storm, flamboy American luxury fashi designer Isaac Mizrahi ca be wished to dabble next entertainment. Mizrahi, in Singapore recently to launch his co lection, told Reuters he w on the verge of stepping int a new frontier — the wor of entertainment — whic would "accentuate an enhance" his image as designer and an artist. "I have aspiration in th



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SIDE

nt be in the arms of... PARTY GAMES

FIND THE CITY

ple numbered letter... they are given... names of the places... mbered letters. Here... it rearranged... HAWK... hronic MANCHESTER... more examples...

(2) MORE (3) LPOOPI... (5) NEDA

PUZZLES

EV

ly the object... with the letters...

Arts & Culture

Jordan Times, Thursday, January 23, 1997 C

Disney's spin on Hugo classic — critics sniff but kids flock to it

By Marilyn August
The Associated Press

PARIS — Never mind the happy ending and historical inaccuracies. Never mind that Quasimodo, created by Victor Hugo as a grotesque monstrosity, is transformed into a funny-looking fellow with a heart of gold.

In the land where it all began, Disney's Hunchback Of Notre Dame is a hit.

Some film critics have taken issue with the movie, but that hasn't stopped 5.2 million viewers from pouring into cinemas since its Nov. 27 opening, making it the country's second-most popular film last year.

Some are impressed by its adventure scenes, others by its lessons on morality and others by its re-

levance to today's world.

Riding the film's popularity, Hugo's house in Paris is displaying the novelist's own drawings of medieval Paris, boat tours on the Seine linger at the 11th-century Notre Dame Cathedral and the movie's merchandising is doing a brisk business.

"The film is doing better here than anywhere else in Europe, because of French cultural and literary traditions," said Philippe Ravnas, director of Corporate Communications at Disneyland Paris.

"People are familiar with Hugo's epic, but they don't criticize Disney for making an animated feature film inspired by it."

While the respected Le Monde underscored Disney's manipulation of historical truth — baguettes didn't exist in medieval times — it presented the

film as a serious take on timely themes.

The leftist daily Libération compared Esmeralda's life-saving request for asylum in Notre Dame and an incident last summer in which French police bashed down the doors of a Paris church to rout nearly 200 illegal African immigrants.

Unfortunately, the message of church-as-sanctuary may have been lost on the kids. Only a handful of children interviewed said they had picked up on the concept.

"I didn't get it until the end, and only when my mother explained it," said 10-year-old Anais Davezac. "For me, 'Hunchback' was an adventure movie."

But the weightier points have not hampered sales of "Hunchback"-related items.

Clothing, umbrellas, gloves and tote bags adorned with Esmeralda's

green eyes and sexy curves were among the pre-Christmas best-sellers at the Disney store on the Champs-Elysees. Now reduced 30 per cent, they're being snatched up by bargain-hunting movie fans.

Elsewhere, Esmeralda dolls and costumes along with character figures are hot.

To coincide with the movie, the theme park outside Paris has created a new parade featuring 150 costumed dancers reenacting a "carnival of fools." Costumes are handed out to visitors, who are encouraged to participate.

Disneyland Paris and American Express also have dreamed up a "Hunchback" package tour featuring a four-night, five-day hotel stay at the park and a visit to Notre Dame and its picturesque belfry.



Quasimodo, the bell ringer of Notre Dame (centre), joins the 'Feast of Fools' celebration in the Walt Disney production of The Hunchback Of Notre Dame (Reuter photo)

Iranian clergymen seek to set up religious cinema

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's ruling Shi'ite Muslim clergy are seeking to turn the national cinema into a cultural tool to promote the "sacred" values of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran's culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry organised a seminar with the title of Religious Cinema earlier this month to try to encour-

age film-makers to produce movies with religious themes and content.

Clergymen, film critics, movie directors and producers as well as army officials debated ways of "transforming" the country's cinema to better serve Islamic principles.

Others argued that the clergy should exercise more

control over film-making to ensure the movies' contents and forms conformed to Islamic teachings.

"Moral and Islamic criteria are always to be respected in movie-making in our country," said ultra-conservative cleric Ayatollah Ahmad Janati, who usually takes a tough line on cultural issues.

The ayatollah, who heads the Islamic information campaign in Iran and abroad, said Iranian artists should feel as though they had a "mission" to serve Islam when having a production at hand.

However, Mojtaba Razi, a producer of several popular feature-length movies, said during the conference that

there was "no clear formulae" to follow to make a so-called religious movie.

Since its rise 17 years ago, the Islamic Republic has waged a fierce campaign to eradicate all signs of "decadent" Western arts and culture and replace it with Islamic ones.

Iran's spiritual and political leader Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei, in a meeting recently with a group of movie directors and producers, said the national cinema should be guided by "messages" of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranian fundamentalists have consistently attacked independent film-makers who have often won laurels in international festivals. Amid growing restric-

tions on film-making, several celebrated directors and actors have either left the country or plan to do so.

Last year, 214 people in the movie business published an open letter, protesting the growing interference of the state in film-making.

"Cinema should be devoid of any vice and corruption," Ayatollah Janati said, de-

manding that the movies made here conform to the Islamic Law of Sharia.

Iran produces an average of 60 movies per year, mainly comedies, war stories and melodramas with strong family overtones.

The authorities have encouraged film-makers to produce more movies on the 1980-1988 war against Iraq.



High-impact fashion

A MIXTURE of fizz, fantasy and fun made up the winning cocktail that London Fashion Week has become famous for. And the latest one heralding ideas for 1997 was no exception.

But among the fabulous, the fanciful and the retro, one particular collection stood out as modern, yet with an uncomplicated, wearable simplicity.

It came from husband-and-wife team Joely Nian, a new name in the fashion world, who made their London debut last year.

Fabrics are a top priority with Joely Nian and it is mainly these that give their designs their futuristic look. Great emphasis is put on the new technological textiles, with insistence on high quality in

design and manufacturing (pictured).

In the new collection, the fabrics, transparent and gauze, shaped with sharp stretch suitings, and their signature cyber lycra, use the most advanced finishing techniques available. Colours range from quiet flesh tones to translucent greens and blues, as well as rouge and lipstick reds.

Joely Davis first followed a degree in business and fashion merchandising, worked as a stylist in Japan, then continued her studies at Central St. Martin's and the University of Westminster in London. Nian Brindle, former member of the band, the Milltown Brothers, previously worked on production with designer Liza Bruce — London Press Service.

Sundance draws cutting-edge movies, mainstream execs

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — The Sundance Film Festival opened Sunday in Utah with 127 films and plane-loads of Hollywood executives on the trail of fresh faces and hidden box-office gold.

The festival in the ski resort of Park City — "Cannes With Snow" — has long been considered the showplace for independent filmmakers who borrow cameras, use friends as actors and turn their garages into editing rooms.

Times have changed. The critical acclaim and popular appeal of festival highlights such as last year's Shine, Fargo, Lone Star, and Trainspotting have turned Sundance into a prime hunting ground for major stu-

dios.

An estimated 100,000 people — twice the number who showed up two years ago — are expected to attend the 11-day competition featuring 71 world premieres and 34 American debuts.

Two years ago, there were 250 entries for the dramatic competition category. This year, 18 films were culled from 600 candidates. Even the short films category is hot. Sixty were selected from 1,200 submitted.

Actor-director Robert Redford set up the festival about a decade ago to highlight films with a slightly bent perspective or dicey subject matters that major studios might shun.

Perspectives may still be bent and subjects still dicey. But the festival now draws

mainstream studio executives by the hundreds, and pricey hotels and restaurants are booked well in advance.

Hollywood seeks talented, virtually unknown directors who will sell their films for \$10 million or less.

That's the goal. But if a quality product looks enticing, a bidding war would be expected, involving not only Hollywood, but also European and Australian studios.

"There will be an unprecedented number of acquisitions (and) people with money to burn, and they aren't going to leave empty-handed," Sony Pictures Classics Co-President Tom Bernard told Variety.

Some major studios have created new lines with something akin to indepen-

dent filmmakers. They are sending their film entries — distribution already in place — to Park City to create a media buzz.

Gramercy, for example, is weighing in with gridlock'd featuring the late rapper Tupac Shakur. Disney has Prefontaine, a story of the celebrated distance runner directed by Steve James, who made his reputation at Sundance with Hoop Dreams.

Even the U.S. government now has a hand in independent filmmaking.

Six out of 16 documentary category entrants are being funded, in part or completely, by the Independent Television Service, created by the government in 1991 to reach "underserved audiences."

The subject matters of this

year's entries differ from last year's recurring themes of angst-ridden rural America and criminal extremes. This year, sexual politics and gender bending will dominate the festival.

Several male directors will weigh in with lesbian love such as Chasing Amy and 100 Proof. Director Michael Ondaatje will take on incest in This World, Then The Fireworks.

On the gay front, Gregg Araki will promote his Fine Line Features picture, Nowhere.

One of the festival's most intriguing events could turn out to be a Jan. 23 panel discussion on sexual politics. No panelist has yet been named.

Small independent filmmakers crowding Hollywood studios

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

LOS ANGELES — After pumping millions of dollars into stars' salaries and computerised special effects, Hollywood's moguls are watching low-budget films walk off with top critics' awards.

In a slap in the face to Hollywood's big studios, the recent Los Angeles Critics Awards, New York Film Critics Awards, and others have given the lion's share of their top prizes to independent filmmakers' productions like Secrets And Lies, Breaking The Waves, and Shine.

The most coveted prize here, of course, comes at the Academy Awards in March. Oscars bestow prestige and can boost a movie's box-office take by 25 per cent or more.

Last year, Italy's The Postman was made on a \$4 million budget. After several Oscar nominations it went on to gross \$80 million — even before going to video.

By comparison, Hollywood's top stars command \$20 million a movie, pushing film costs upward of \$60 million, with Waterworld holding the heavyweight title of \$120 million.

Theaters are increasingly making room for movies made by Australians, British and this year the Danes, though Hollywood still likes the homegrown "feelgood" movies like Jerry Maguire and Michael.

Who's to blame for Hollywood losing ground? Round up the usual suspects: Screenwriting by committee, A-list stars with final say on a script and studios that dumb down scripts (The Scarlet Letter got a happy ending).

Actress Lynn Redgrave, who in Shine played the wife of a concert pianist emerging from more than a decade of mental illness to musical greatness, said independents succeed because they remain faithful to a vision.

"In the studios there are too many cooks," she said.

"Let's have a survey and see if these demographics work best. Whoops, let's change the ending, let's change the beginning. Let's cast somebody totally different."

"For independents, particularly of course in Australia, once you've raised the money — and it may take forever to raise the money — they let you make your film."

Secrets And Lies director Mike Leigh said at the Los Angeles Critics Awards where he won the slot for best director that he finds nothing wrong with what Hollywood does, as long as he doesn't have to do it.

"I don't really think — and I say this with no disrespect to anybody — that it would be possible to make (my) film within the so-called 'system' here," Leigh said.

Redgrave said she hoped the success of independent films might spur Hollywood to call off its armies of writers and producers and instead stand back and let the filmmaker and actors do their

jobs.

Breaking The Waves producer Vibeke Windelov of Denmark, who spent four years working with director Lars Von Trier to get the movie made, said some studios are trying to do just that, though she harbours doubts about the end result.

"We worked so hard to be independent and Lars started the film company Zentrop in order to have the freedom and independence to do whatever he wants to do," she said. "And we are not going to give that up."

If they can't be hired, goes the Hollywood standard, buy them.

At least two Hollywood studios are reported to be taking a close look at purchasing the seven-year-old company October Films, which made both Breaking The Waves and Secrets And Lies.

Entertainment weekly writer Benjamin Svetkey said that most of Hollywood's films come to theatres dead on arrival because of medio-

cre scriptwriting.

"Who's responsible for what can only be described as the cold-blooded murder of the great American screenplay? Interrogate enough witnesses and you'll find that pretty much everyone is a suspect."

No less than 32 writers, for instance, worked on The Flintstones script while some big name actors bring their own writers to the set. Frantic rewriting has rendered many movies into incomprehensible plots and sloppy narratives.

"A script?" responded director Leigh, eyebrows raised and a look of disdain on his face, when asked if it remained true to his vision. Then he uttered what for passes as blasphemy in Hollywood: "There is no script."

"I make films with no script. I work six months with the actors and the film grows out of the work we do. We improvise until we arrive at something that is very, very solid."

Designer Mizrahi to woo entertainment world

By Angela Tan
Reuters

SINGAPORE — After taking the world of haute couture by storm, flamboyant American luxury fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi said he wished to dabble next in entertainment.

Mizrahi, in Singapore recently to launch his collection, told Reuters he was on the verge of stepping into a new frontier — the world of entertainment — which would "accentuate and enhance" his image as a designer and an artist.

"I have aspiration in the

entertainment industry. I (will) like very much to expand in that direction. I am going in that direction. I think they are very related industries. I can't do one without the other," the 35-year-old Mizrahi said in an interview.

Dressed in a white T-shirt and a self-labelled dark suit sans his signature bandana, Mizrahi said the move would not interfere with his primary high fashion career. The man who gained attention for his offbeat sense of colour and whimsical designs early in his career,

said he believes everything is achievable in life if one follows the heart.

"It will not interfere with my designing. As a designer and an artist, everything you do adds to your work, your product and your clothes... It's an education," Mizrahi said, alluding to his designs in entertainment.

"It gives me a lot of inspiration, influence and motivation to make my clothes (in) a certain way. If I don't do it, it would be so frustrating that I couldn't continue doing my clothing. It's debilitating not to be able to

do what you want," he said.

Mizrahi, who has received a number of offers from the entertainment industry, said he was undecided if his venture into movies would be in production, script-writing or acting.

Mizrahi's Unzipped highly publicised.

"My job is not only to create fashion but culture. I want to create an awareness of what I think people should be thinking about and looking like," he said, adding that environmental

conservation was one issue he wished to advance.

A graduate of New York's Parsons School of Design, Mizrahi made his feature debut in 1994 in a Michael J. Fox comedy, For The Love Of Money, playing a fashion designer.

In 1995, he was the main feature of the highly publicised documentary Unzipped, which showed him cavorting with supermodels and fashion editors.

Mizrahi made the movie with director-photographer Douglas Keeve.

He also created costumes

for theatre, ballet and films, including Spike Lee's Jungle Fever, earning himself accolades from the retail and fashion world.

Mizrahi said he would be completing a book of fiction on the fashion industry to be published towards the end of the year.

On the secret of his drive and success, Mizrahi said that he culled inspiration or "revelations" from films and ballet, and by living life to its fullest.

"In fashion designing, I don't believe in the tail wagging the dog. I'm the dog

that wags the tail," he said.

His company saw "phenomenal growth" in recent years, notably from the launch of the secondary collection of ISC and expansion into lucrative Asian markets.

The alliance with Singapore's high fashion retailer and distributor, F.J. Benyamini, will add to his presence in Asia.

Mizrahi to unveil new products

Mizrahi's main collection will also introduce new

products later this year, such as dining sets, menswear, accessories, fragrances and casual clothes. This is in addition to the shoes and eyewear that were introduced a couple of years ago.

In defining the woman he designs his clothing for, Mizrahi said she would be ageless and active, funny and colourful.

She will appreciate the past and future but live for the moment.

"She has a sense of joy, living life, realising that you never have a chance to re-do it," Mizrahi said.

Thai kidney patients seek lifeline on China's death row

By Matthew Pennington
Agence France Presse

BANGKOK — Thais are travelling to China for costly organ transplant surgery using kidneys extracted from executed convicts, surgeons say.

Desperate patients unable to find donor organs at home pay more than one million baht (\$40,000) for operations by unqualified doctors, that would cost only 150-200,000 baht in Thailand.

Unscrupulous agents in Bangkok who arrange the operations are believed to be making a killing on the trade, doctors say.

About 20 Thais travel to government hospitals in southern China every year for the costly surgery. Dr. Phaibul Jitpraphai, a surgeon at Bangkok's Siriraj Hospital and president of the Thai Transplantation Society, told AFP.

Indonesians, Malaysians and Taiwanese also use the hospitals to receive organs taken from executed convicts, he said.

Amnesty International reports that most transplant organs in China are taken from executed convicts whose consent — or that of

their families — is rarely, if ever, obtained.

Dr. Phaibul said the Chinese government had taken steps to clampdown over the past two years, but operations were still available and there is plenty of demand.

General practitioners in the Chinese hospitals rather than officially recognised transplant surgeons perform the operations which can be organised through middlemen in the Thai capital, including an ethnic Chinese travel agent, he said.

Although patients who choose to be operated on in China run an enormous risk of infection — about 60 per cent of the soon after surgery, according to Dr. Phaibul — some still prefer to take the chance to life on a dialysis machine.

Jiraporn Yoonuch, 36, survived two transplant operations.

In 1985, she underwent a successful operation in Taiwan, but unwittingly stopped taking her medication seven years later and began rejecting her donor kidney.

"I felt like vomiting all the time and I couldn't eat properly because I had major kidney failure," she said. "I was spending 10

hours a week on a dialysis machine with that big needle in my arm," said the mother-of-one.

After eleven months on the donor waiting list in Thailand, she sought a lifeline from the Chinese prisoners on death row.

"I had a daughter and husband and I wanted to be alive. These people (the convict donors) did something wrong and were being punished. I can't say I felt pity for them."

Taking her own supply of drugs with her, she checked into the Nanfeng Hospital in Guangzhou, and waited for "killing day" having signed an agreement waiving the hospital of responsibility should she die.

There were up to eight patients in a room designed for one, she said.

Aware of the dangers of the operations, which are reportedly done without tissue-typing to properly match donors and recipients, she is now warning other desperate patients against China transplants.

She volunteers as a counsellor for the Thai Transplantation Society which she helped set up.

Ms. Jiraporn tells sufferers that if there is no donor

available within the family it is better to wait for a brain dead donor in Thailand or put up with dialysis.

"If you really want to go and can't wait any longer, go to China — but do it at your own risk," she says.

But despite her warning, a rise in the number of people needing transplants accompanied by a decrease in the supply of donor organs in Thailand spurs desperate kidney patients into looking abroad.

"In Thailand we have over 1,200 people on our transplant waiting list and it's growing by over 20 per cent per year," he said.

Dr. Phaibul said a law making it mandatory for motorcycle riders to wear crash helmets has hit the prime supply source of kidney donors — people killed in traffic accidents.

"Last year we had only 23 cadaveric donors in Thailand, down from over 60 in 1995," he said.

Other experts attribute the lack of available donor organs in Thailand to traditional beliefs about reincarnation and the reluctance of grieving families to let doctors take organs — even if the dead person had a donor card.

Greater walking freedom for amputees

A LEADING artificial-limb maker based in the United Kingdom has developed a computer-controlled prosthesis that gives amputees greater walking freedom.

The Endolite Intelligent Prosthesis Plus — designed by Chas. A. Blatchford & Sons Ltd. — is the only artificial lower-limb unit that uses a microcomputer to allow the above-the-knee amputee to experience natural walking over a wide range of speeds.

Pictured here is Saeed Zahedi, Blatchford's senior research engineer, with the Intelligent Prosthesis (also known as the IP+) at the company's headquarters in southern England.

A radio-linked remote control with audio feedback and visual-guidance system enable the prosthesis to programme the IP+ at a single session within minutes, even when it has a cosmetic covering and while the amputee is fully clothed.

Uniquely, this enables the programming to take place in an everyday environment. Once complete, the programmed IP+ automatically provides five valve settings to cover the entire walking-speed range of the individual, who is then free to enjoy normal walking.

Mr. Zahedi says: "For the first time it allows a rapid programming of the prosthesis with full cosmetic covering outside the clinical environment, enabling the amputee to walk at a variety of speeds without the need for any compensation."

Independent scientific reports demonstrate that walking with the IP+ reduces energy expenditure by over 10 per cent. Many users say that it allows them to walk for longer periods of time.

The revolutionary design was recognised earlier last year when the company was honoured with the prestigious Queen's Award for Technological Achievement. Blatchford was also



New vaccine for hepatitis launched in Britain

LONDON (R) — A new combined vaccine against both hepatitis A and B was launched in Britain Wednesday, with doctors saying it would help European travellers protect themselves from the highly infectious viruses.

The vaccine, SmithKline Beecham's Twinrix, won approval from the European Union in September. It has not been approved anywhere else outside Europe.

"I think it's a great step forward in the development of vaccines," said Dr. Jane Zuckerman, a travel medicine specialist and vaccine researcher at London's

Royal Free Hospital who helped evaluate the vaccine.

She said combining the vaccinations meant more people would get them and thus be protected against infection. Both viruses are endemic, or widespread, in Asia, Africa and South America.

Dr. Zuckerman said it was mainly being directed at European travellers. "In time one would hope that it would become available to those in developing countries where hepatitis is endemic," she added.

The vaccine was not as difficult to develop as scientists had feared, Dr. Zuckerman said. "It was just a matter of combining the two... in a vaccine that did not affect the (effects) of either vaccine."

She said the vaccine was safe and very effective.

Hepatitis B is 100 times more infectious than the HIV virus that causes AIDS. It kills two million people a year and is responsible for 80 per cent of all cases of liver cancer.

Hepatitis A can also be fatal, with nearly two per cent of adults who get it dying from it. About 1.4 million cases are reported around the world each year but SmithKline estimates there

are up to 10 million cases.

Hepatitis B is spread, like HIV, through bodily fluids like blood or semen. Hepatitis A can be spread this way or via infected water or food.

Companies are working on drugs to treat the disease but none has been found to be fully effective. Vaccines do work, however.

A full course of Twinrix requires three injections in the arm over six months. It provides full protection for five years.

Travellers wanting long-term protection against hepatitis A and B used to require five or six injections.

king with the IP+ reduces energy expenditure by over 10 per cent. Many users say that it allows them to walk for longer periods of time.

The revolutionary design was recognised earlier last year when the company was honoured with the prestigious Queen's Award for Technological Achievement. Blatchford was also

U.K. delays animal-to-human transplants

By Maggie Fox
Reuters

LONDON — The British government, worried about strange viruses and other health issues, said Thursday it would ban animal-to-human organ transplants until scientists knew more about their safety.

It said it would pass laws if necessary to prevent any human trials of such transplants, known as xenotransplants.

"It is essential that the risks associated with xenotransplantation are better understood before the technique is used on human patients," Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell said in a statement.

He said new laws governing xenotransplants would be introduced as soon as possible.

"It is the right decision. There are risks, risks which go beyond the actual patient," Robin Weiss of the Institute of Cancer Research told BBC Television.

Experts say viruses not harmful to the host animal

could kill people — and would be difficult to screen for. Once infected, a transplant patient could infect many others.

For instance, the HIV virus that causes AIDS is believed to have originated in monkeys or apes.

Last year the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, an advisory group made up of doctors, scientists and other experts, said xenotransplants would be ethically acceptable if precautions were taken to make sure humans did not risk infection and animals were not abused.

David Shapiro, executive secretary of the council, said Britain was probably the first country to make such a move.

"Both in the U.S. and in the U.K. we are gearing ourselves up for it as we are likely to be the first two countries affected," he said.

"Britain has taken a decision. The United States is still in the process... The U.K. has got there slightly ahead and there is a serious divide about thinking on this."

The U.S. Institute of Medicine issued guidelines on possible animal transplants last autumn but has not called for national regulation.

Imutran, a Cambridge-based company that has been leading the development of animal organs for transplant, said it accepted that further research was needed.

"Extensive research at Imutran is already in progress to investigate the issues raised in the report, including the important issue of patient safety," the company, owned by Novartis, said in a statement.

"It is also important to understand that even when clinical trials begin, it will be the next century before xenotransplantation could become a routine procedure. Therefore it is essential to support existing efforts to increase organ donation," it added.

"It may be that the real hope for the future is with artificial organs," Dr. Vivienne Nathanson of the

British Medical Association's Ethics Committee, told the BBC.

Imutran has been breeding pigs that carry human genes. The cells of their internal organs are coated with human molecules to help stop the recipient's immune system from rejecting them.

Pigs are popular candidates because they are similar in size to people. Pig insulin is already used to treat diabetics, and animal heart valves have been used in heart surgery.

Animal welfare groups have urged that all animal-to-human transplants be banned. Compassion in world farming said it feared not only that viruses threatened people, but that animals would be mistreated.

"Transgenic pigs will be reared in unnatural, sterile conditions," it said in a statement. "The track record of farm animal genetic engineering is one of unfulfilled promises and widespread animal suffering."

CAIRO (AP) — A Saudi opposition group has claimed that Saudi Arabia will execute 30 Shi'ite Muslims for their role in last year's bombing of the 19 U.S. servicemen.

But the group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, did not name sources, and Saudi Arabia has insisted the investigation into the June 25 bombing is not yet complete.

The truck-bombing of the U.S. military housing complex in Dhahran, eastern Saudi Arabia, was the second in less than a year to target the U.S. presence in the kingdom.

November 1995, a bombing of a U.S.-run military training complex in Saudi capital Riyadh killed five Americans and 11 Indians.

The London-based group said that Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef had informed the United States of the decision.

The group's leader, Sa'ad Al-Fajhi, said in an interview that the Shi'ites are scapegoats and that the responsible are from the Sunni Muslim majority in Saudi Arabia. The government draws its support from the Sunni religious establishment and is reluctant to point to opposition within its own ranks, he said.

Quoting unnamed Saudi and U.S. officials, Mr. Fajhi said the U.S. government warned Saudi Arabia that it would not accept the results of the investigation without U.S. officials interviewing the suspects and reviewing the findings.

"They asked for hard evidence before an announcement is made," Mr. Fajhi said.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials. But after Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis Freeh's most recent trip to Saudi Arabia in November, U.S. officials said they had been given more access to evidence than before.

Last year, four young Saudis were executed for their role in the Riyadh bombing before U.S. officials were able to question them.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

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By Stanley Whitten

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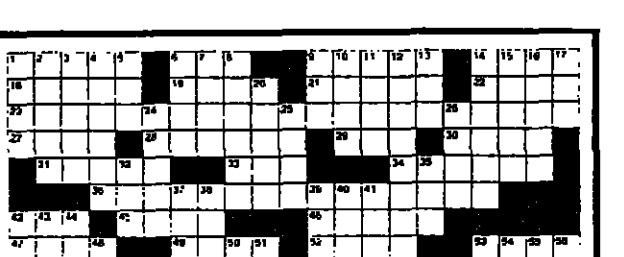


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By Frances Burton

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Diagram 19x19
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100. Deal

Diagram 19x19
By Frances Burton

Thoughts for this week

Never forget what a man says to you when he is angry
— H.W. Beecher, U.S. clergyman (1813-1887).

Not life, but a good life, is to be chiefly valued
— Socrates, Greek philosopher (About-470 BC. 399 BC).

Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind
— Albert Einstein, German-born physicist (1879-1955).

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

(1) A person who is ready to play the part of an actor or an actress if he/she is ill.
(2) The part of theatre on the ground floor immediately behind the stalls.
(3) Prometheus.
(4) Morpheus was the god of sleep. Hence the expression signifies "in a deep sleep."

PUZZLES

Khartoum claims successful offensive, rebels urge revolt

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Sudan said Wednesday its forces had killed or wounded dozens of "enemy" fighters on its eastern border with Ethiopia, while opposition leaders called for an uprising against the government.

"The casualties were inflicted on the enemy in fighting that erupted on all axes of the war front Tuesday night," the government daily Al Sudan Al Hadith reported from Damazin, capital of Blue Nile state, in the first official admission of a government offensive in the east.

Government forces "killed and wounded tens of enemy forces, and the army, after receiving substantial reinforcements, forced them to retreat," the daily said. It gave no indication of where the fighting was taking place.

It reiterated a claim that Ethiopia was involved in the fighting, saying that "documents, including ID cards and Ethiopian currency, were found in the pockets of the killed troops, proving the involvement of the Tigray (Ethiopian) troops in the assault on Karmuk and Qeissan."

The independent weekly Al Mokher reported that Sudanese forces late Tuesday "destroyed six tanks of the invader forces and inflicted heavy casualties on them while the air force bombarded the enemy positions. ... The operations are still continuing."

Khartoum has repeatedly accused neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea of tak-

ing part in the fighting as part of an alleged U.S.-led conspiracy despite denials by both Addis Ababa and Asmara.

On Tuesday Sudanese Vice-President Al Zubair Mohammad Saleh said that government troops were in control of the situation in the east.

But rebel forces claimed to have killed 1,260 Sudanese soldiers between Jan. 12 and 16 and to be advancing on Damazin, site of a key hydroelectric power station.

The rebels, who on Jan. 12 claimed the capture of the border towns of Karmuk and Qeissan, meanwhile, said they were not seeking to conquer the whole of the country by force of arms but simply to "put military pressure" on Khartoum to "prepare the ground for an uprising."

A spokesman for the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), Farouk Abu Eissa, said in Cairo that the operations in eastern Sudan aimed "to encourage the people, particularly in Khartoum, to rise up and overthrow the regime."

"We urge our brothers in the Arab World to back the struggle of the Sudanese people (against the Islamic government) and stop it from spreading its lies in the media and Arab institutions," the alliance leader said.

The NDA combines the Sudanese northern opposition and southern rebels opposed to domination by the mainly Arab-Muslim north.

Mr. Abu Eissa read out a statement by NDA leader Mohammad Osman Al Mirghani in which he called on Arab countries to ignore Khartoum's calls for help.

The statement aimed to counter a diplomatic offensive launched by Khartoum, particularly towards the Gulf states, in response to the rebel attacks in the east.

The Sudanese authorities have arrested hundreds of opposition members, most of them since the start of a rebel military offensive, the Sudanese human rights organisation said Wednesday.

"The authorities launched a campaign (of arrests) on Jan. 7 and stepped it up on the 13th after the attack by the National Democratic Alliance," it said in a statement.

It spoke of the arrests of "hundreds of Sudanese" in Khartoum and other towns across the country.

"The way in which these people were arrested shows the intention of the authorities to make use of violence against those being detained," the group added. Last week, Justice Minister Abdul Bassir Sidbarat said the government was seeking to "get information" about the opposition through these arrests.

"We ask again the Sudanese authorities to set free unconditionally the detainees," the statement said.



KING HOSTS IF TAR: His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday hosted an iftar for notables of Amman and Balqa governorates. Attending the banquet were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, the King's advisers and other officials. (Petra photo)

Arafat pledges to declare state despite Netanyahu threats

(Continued from page 1)

the status of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

Earlier Wednesday, Mr. Arafat briefed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the Hebron agreement signed with Israel last week and on future Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Egypt helped mediate between the Palestinians and Israelis during their long negotiations on the Israeli troop redeployment from the West Bank town of Hebron.

Mr. Arafat also said that Israel has failed to comply with 34 items agreed to in the talks, including the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Mr. Arafat also repeated his determination to "walk together with Israel on the path of peace."

"There are 34 points of conflict still with Israel including the issue of the Palestinian men and women held in Israeli jails, the safe passage (between Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho)," and air and sea ports for the autonomous territory of Gaza, Mr. Arafat said.

The Hebron accord's "note for the record" says negotiations on safe passage, the Gaza port and airport and economic, financial, civilian and security issues were to be resumed immediately.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Israeli army withdrew from 80 per cent of the West Bank town on Fri-

day and handed the city's administration over to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The Israeli army remains in control of 20 per cent of Hebron, which contains enclaves where 450 Jewish settlers live and the Ibrahim Mosque. Mr. Arafat said "arrangements" will be made for the Ibrahim Mosque.

Mr. Arafat, who arrived from Rome early Wednesday after attending the Socialist International, met privately with President Mubarak for one hour before seeing Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid.

No statement was issued at the end of the talks between the two presidents.

But before leaving Mr. Arafat said: "We ask that the Egyptian efforts which accompanied us every step of the way so far to continue during the implementation phase."

"The most important thing now is to implement everything we have agreed upon, and I felt that President Mubarak is ready to help us continue this on this difficult course," he added before going back to Gaza by helicopter.

After 87 members of the Israeli Knesset voted in favour of the accord, the Israeli people want peace and we must walk together on the path of peace for the sake of the coming generations," he added.

Libya breaks air ban

(Continued from page 1)

who asked not to be named.

The official Libyan news agency JANA, monitored in Tunis, said an adviser to Presi-

dent Jerry Rawlings and a Ghanaian Foreign Ministry official greeted the Libyan Foreign Ministry delegation at the airport.

Earlier on Wednesday, Libya said it had told the Security Council that it considered itself no longer subject to the air embargo after it gave permission for an American-piloted balloon to overfly its territory last week.

The delegation was visiting Ghana on an official visit, the agency said.

Libya has on several occasions violated a ban on international flights which is part of sanctions imposed by the United Nations in 1992 after it refused to hand over two Libyans indicted in the United States and Britain for their alleged role in the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 killing 270 people.

JANA said earlier on Wednesday: "Libya has informed the Security Council that the Libyan Arab Airlines will continue its international flights and (Libya will) open its airspace to aircraft from other states after it permitted U.S. citizen Steve Fossitt's balloon to cross the Libyan air-space."

It said a Libyan diplomat had handed a letter setting out Tripoli's position to the Security Council chairman and asked that it be circulated as an official document of the council.

A U.N. Sanctions Committee source on Tuesday rejected the Libyan claim, saying it was a "lot of hot air".

Libya has broken the flight ban on several occasions — it flew pilgrims to Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996 and a Libyan-registered aircraft flew Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to Cairo and back to attend an Arab summit in June 1996. After the Qadhafi flight the U.N. Sanctions Committee warned Libya that it would consider recommending tougher curbs if the violations were repeated.

House approves changes to law on State Security Court

(Continued from page 1)

The bill now goes to the Upper House of Parliament (Senate).

The amended legislation extends the jurisdiction of the State Security Court to cover certain crimes which are at present dealt with by regular courts.

During its session on Wednesday, the House also discussed and approved amendments to laws related to civil courts proposed by the government in 1994. The approval came in line with recommendations made by the Judicial Committee.

Earlier in the session, Islamist Deputy Bassam Omoush (Zarqa) assailed what he described as the indecent and unethical approach of some of the local publications.

"It has reached a stage where certain papers are publishing details of marital affairs and homosexuality," Dr. Omoush said, stressing that the Lower House was "extremely offended" by such publications.

He demanded that the government take all necessary actions to stop such materials from being published, specially since "His Majesty King Hussein has expressed his disapproval of what was being printed and has called on responsible officials to put an end to it."

Dr. Omoush did not name any specific publication, but his remarks appeared to have been prompted by a local weekly tabloid which, in its latest issue, carried a sexually explicit article on what it said was the immoral behaviour of some married men and cases of women seeking divorce on

the basis of such behaviour.

Responding to Dr. Omoush, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said that the government agreed with the deputy and would take action to put an end to stop local publications from carrying indecent, obscene and unacceptable articles.

Mr. Kabariti also stated that the government feels that any promotion of decadent behaviour must be stopped. "Violating the privacy of citizens and tampering with public decency is an outrageous infringement on human rights and does not represent the true mission of the press," he said.

Mr. Kabariti said that the government had already referred 10 such cases to court and was waiting for verdicts. He added that the government believes that current Press and Publications Law does not provide enough deterrence from such violations.

Mr. Kabariti said the government believed that the ceiling of press responsibility and penalties should be raised.

"When the government used to take steps in that directions in the past, its actions used to be accused of being undemocratic, although it was not what the government aimed at," he said. "The government was and still is committed to the protection of the citizens from indecent violations."

Mr. Kabariti suggested that the House's National Steering Committee should present the government with necessary recommendations in order to deal with the issue as best as possible.

Dissidents claim S. Arabia plans to execute 30 for bombing

CAIRO (AP) — A Saudi opposition group has claimed that Saudi Arabia will execute 30 Shiite Muslims for their role in last year's bombing that killed 19 U.S. servicemen.

But the group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, did not name its sources, and Saudi Arabia has insisted the investigation into the June 25 bombing is not yet complete.

The truck-bombing of the U.S. military housing complex in Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia was the second in less than a year to target the U.S. presence in the kingdom. In November 1995, a bombing of a U.S.-run military training complex in the Saudi capital Riyadh killed five Americans and two Indians.

The London-based group said that Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef has informed the United States of the decision.

The group's leader, Saad Al Faqih, said in an interview that the Shiites are a scapegoat and that those responsible are from the Sunni Muslim majority in Saudi Arabia. The government draws its support from the Sunni religious establishment and is reluctant to point to opposition within its own ranks, he said.

Quoting unnamed Saudi and U.S. officials, Mr. Faqih said the U.S. government warned Saudi Arabia that it would not accept the results of the investigation without U.S. officials first interviewing the suspects and reviewing the findings.

"They asked for hard evidence before any announcement is made," Mr. Faqih said.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials. But after Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh's most recent trip to Saudi Arabia in November, U.S. officials said they had been given more access to evidence than before.

Last year, four young Saudis were executed for their role in the Riyadh bombing before U.S. officials were able to question them.

Shots heard from hostage crisis residence in Peruvian capital

LIMA (AFP) — At least five gunshots rang out early Wednesday at the Japanese ambassador's residence here after a day on which police

taunted the leftist rebels holding 73 hostages inside for more than five weeks.

Two shots followed quickly by a short burst from an automatic weapon were heard overnight shortly before troops and police surrounded the compound were due to be relieved.

No reason for the shooting was immediately given but it apparently came from armed Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels who took over the residence on Dec. 17.

Police and soldiers scrambled to take up combat positions, but after 15 minutes of silence troops and police on duty were relieved.

Police from Peru's special operations force had staged combat exercises and hurled

rocks into the compound on Tuesday, taunting the rebels inside. A police colonel told AFP the actions were normal, but denied the rock-throwing witnessed by an AFP photographer.

Rebels also fired into the air on Jan. 13. Tupac Amaru leader Nestor Cerna said later in a radio statement that the shots were provoked by police throwing rocks and other objects inside the compound.

As of midday Wednesday, the scene was calm with no immediate explanation for the shooting. A police helicopter buzzed over the area four times but the rebels did not react.

On Dec. 26, an explosion took place inside the compound which police said they believed was caused by a dog tripping a landmine laid by the rebels. Three shots were heard on Jan. 7 and another four on Jan. 10.

Japan's lower house of parliament unanimously adopted

a resolution Wednesday pledging to work with the Peruvian government for an immediate release of the 73 hostages.

The prominent hostages include Japanese Ambassador Morihisa Aoki, Japanese executives, Bolivian Ambassador Jorge Gumucio, two members of the Peruvian cabinet and President Alberto Fujimori's younger brother.

Negotiations between Peruvian authorities and the Marxist-Leninist rebels have stalled as the government refuses to discuss the guerrilla's main demand that some 400 comrades be set free.

Both sides, however, have agreed form a negotiating commission and have selected three members.

The Red Cross on Tuesday asked neighbours of the Japanese ambassador to allow their homes to be used for talks to end the five-week-old crisis.

Guerrillas may be tapping Israeli army phone

TEL AVIV (R) — Fearing Lebanese guerrillas may have its number, the Israeli army has forbidden soldiers from taking their mobile phones into South Lebanon to be able to phone home.

"It's not permissible to use mobile phones in designated areas of operation such as South Lebanon," chief army spokesman Oded Ben-Ami told Israel's army radio.

The army fears Lebanese Hizbollah guerrillas, fighting to oust the Jewish state and allied militias from South Lebanon occupation zone, are tapping the cellular phone calls of Israeli soldiers.

"The cellular phone is a great means from the standpoint of its effectiveness but it also has an extraordinary potential for exposure. You don't need very sophisticated

machines to listen in on conversations," Mr. Ben-Ami said.

Many Israeli soldiers holster a mobile phone to their hip after slinging an automatic rifle over their shoulder.

Mr. Ben-Ami said the army was trying to find another way for troops to call home from the combat zone without spilling vital information to enemy forces.

"What I am saying is that we will make every effort to prevent any reduction of personal security to our soldiers," Mr. Ben Ami said.

The army has been stung in the past by reports that Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon were using mobile phones to order pizza from northern Israel for mid-night delivery to the border.

Israel plans to 'annex' large slice of West Bank land to Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

The move sparked Palestinian protests and fighting with Israeli troops that left more than 80 people dead.

Palestinian official Saef Erakat reacted furiously to the annexation plan, which he said would destroy the new momentum in the peace process achieved with last week's accord on extending Palestinian rule to the West Bank city of Hebron.

"The last time Mr. Olmert proposed something, we had almost 600 Palestinians and Israelis killed or injured, mostly Palestinians," Mr. Erakat told AFP.

"I am urging Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Olmert not to play with big fire and to let the peace process continue."

Mr. Erakat, who serves as the chief negotiator with the Israelis, said the Oslo peace accords required Israel to negotiate

the future of Jerusalem in upcoming talks on the final status of the Palestinian territories.

The talks are due to be completed by May 1999.

"They know such questions are supposed to be settled in final peace talks that should begin in less than seven weeks from today," Mr. Erakat said.

"I urge the Israelis to spare the lives of Palestinians and Israelis."

PLO backs Libyan offer to stranded Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

The Mediterranean city of Alexandria, Walid Ahmad Abdul Rahman, told Reuters on Wednesday: "We bless and support the Libyan offer."

"We do not support their (the refugees') decision," added the consul, who took part in the events of Tuesday.

The refugees say they would rather go either to Egypt, the autonomous Palestinian areas or anywhere other than Libya. Israel will not let them in to

the Gaza or the West Bank.

On Tuesday some refugees threw stones at young men of the Palestinian revolutionary committees, Palestinian supporters of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, when they tried to put up banners welcoming the decision to let the Palestinians back.

Libyan soldiers aimed machine-guns at the camp residents but their officers ordered them not to shoot.

Members of a joint Libyan-Palestinian delegation, one after another, read speeches urging the refugees to change

their position and accept the Libyan offer.

"Each revolutionary patriot...realises the real dimensions of the call to Palestinians in every part of the world to go back to Palestine," said delegation member Ahmad Saleh.

He was referring to Colonel Qadhafi's original argument for expelling the Palestinians — that if agreements between Israel and the Palestinians had any meaning, it was time the Palestinians went back to their homeland.

ANSWERS OF KNOWLEDGE

1. The main reason for the...
2. The...
3. The...
4. The...
5. The...

PUZZLES

Israel reportedly plan to replace foreign workers with Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli government has drawn up plans to slash the number of legal foreign workers in the country so their jobs can be taken by Palestinians, the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot reported Tuesday.

According to the newspaper, which said it obtained a copy of the project being put together by several ministries, the plan would reduce from 75,000 to 30,000 the number of foreigners granted work permits and would replace them with Palestinians as part of efforts to improve Israeli-Palestinian ties following last week's agreement on extending Palestinian rule to Hebron.

Over the next 10 weeks, 20,000 more Palestinians

from the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be given permission to work in Israel, followed by another 20,000 over the following two months and an additional 5,000 by the end of August.

A labour ministry spokesman confirmed that the government wanted to reduce the number of foreign workers, but denied that any figures had been set or any timetable decided.

The move would return the number of Palestinians authorised to hold jobs inside Israel to its level of early last year before the government imposed severe travel restrictions on residents of the territories following a spate of militant suicide bombings in the

Jewish state.

Palestinian officials say the closure of the territories cost the self-rule Palestinian National Authority tens of millions of dollars and sent unemployment above 40 per cent in the Gaza Strip and 30 per cent in the West Bank.

The restrictions were gradually eased during the final months of 1996 and some 60,000 Palestinian men currently have permission to work in Israel.

But a spokesman for the military administration in the territories said that only 70 per cent of the 60,000 Palestinians holding work permits had actually been able to find work, in part because potential jobs were being held by foreigners.

Israel has over the past

three years turned increasingly towards foreign workers, notably from Romania, Thailand, the Philippines, Thailand and Poland, to replace Palestinians who could not enter the country due to repeated security closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During the same period, more than 100,000 illegal foreign immigrants have flooded into Israel, further saturating the job market in the agriculture and construction sectors which traditionally employed many Palestinians.

Israeli authorities last year already began preparations for the mass expulsion of illegal immigrants, including the opening of special detention camps.

Egypt investment-grade rating bodes well — analysts

CAIRO (R) — Egyptians are delighted by the country's high marks from international credit agencies, which should boost the country's attractions for foreign investors, financial analysts have said.

International rating agency Standard Poor's announced last week it had assigned BBB minus long-term and A3 short-term foreign currency credit ratings to Egypt.

Mulham Alwani at London-based HSBC Markets said the ratings put Egypt on a par with Oman, Colombia and just a notch below Indonesia and China.

Both ratings — the minimum seen as investment grade — have generated reams of euphoric copy in Egypt's government-run press and drew a blessing from President Hosni Mubarak.

Standard Poor's (S.P.) said Egypt's credit rating was constrained by low per capita income and low savings and investments but analysts say the rating itself will help raise both economic indicators.

"The rating will increase investment and that will generate more jobs. It's

kind of self-fulfilling," one analyst said.

"It will increase investors' appetite for Egyptian stocks and encourage direct foreign investment. It's good news for the economy," Mohammad Al Ahmadi of Cairo-based fund managers Concord International Investments told Reuters.

"Investors don't know a lot about the situation in Egypt and this will directly and indirectly help them," he said.

Analysts said the rating would reinforce the benefits of Egypt's imminent listing on the International Financial Corporation composite investable index. It would also ease import and borrowing costs, they added.

S.P. said its ratings reflect government reforms, including privatisation, trade liberalisation, deregulation and a deepening political consensus behind the reforms.

Stung by a speculative grade rating assigned by Moody's Investors Service last October, the government had worked hard at invigorating its privatisation-led reform programme.

Last January, President Mubarak appointed a new reform-minded cabinet and Egyptian officials said that the state raised 2.3 billion pounds (\$680 million) in 1996 by selling assets in government-owned firms.

The reforms have drawn \$2 billion in direct foreign investment last year as well as portfolio investment of about \$600 to \$700 million.

Analysts say the rating will help sustain inflows. President Mubarak was quoted Monday as saying that Egypt should prepare itself for a \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion increase in annual inflows following the rating.

"This rating is excellent and shows that Egypt has potential... It will help imports, exports — and the banking sector will flourish," said Mohammad Hosny, vice president of leading market players Triple A Securities.

The rating will reduce the cost of borrowing, said Farid Ibrahim of the state's National Bank of Egypt (NBE).

"It's cheaper for us to borrow, and funds will be more available. The rating has certainly put Egypt on the

investment map," said Mr. Ibrahim, managing director of NBE's mutual fund.

The rating will also put the economy and the government's policies under close international scrutiny, which analysts say would give the state more reason to go ahead with the reforms.

"The rating is a good start. The government should keep up its privatisation programme and get out of the financial sector and the situation will look up," Mr. Hosny said.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NHK	FRF
US Dollar	0.8110	1.6366	0.6048	1.4257	118.87	1.3351	1594.20	1.8184	5.5220
DE Mark	1.2454	1.0000	0.6309	0.8709	72.59	0.8154	973.26	1.1234	3.3758
GB Sterling	1.6534	2.7090	1.0000	2.3577	196.61	2.2076	2635.58	3.0406	9.1258
CH Franc	0.7014	1.1475	0.4237	1.0000	83.34	0.9351	1117.23	1.2858	3.8795
JP Yen	0.0084	1.3765	0.5084	1.1992	1.0000	1.1230	13.41	154.58	4.6469
CA Dollar	0.7490	1.2257	0.4528	1.0575	1.12	1.0000	1194.00	1.3758	4.1245
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0256	0.3788	0.8884	1343.54	0.8367	1.0000	11.82	3.4623
NL Guilder	0.5440	88.96	0.3287	77.56	64.61	0.7280	886.34	1.0000	3.5363
FR Franc	0.1811	0.2963	0.1094	25.8110	21.49	0.2417	33.25	33.2700	1.0000

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	23.82	23.25
WTI	24.40	24.75
Bony	23.82	23.25
Dubai	20.48	20.45
UL Gas	208.00	208.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4368	0.16127	0.38048	31.7048
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.44605	0.16478	0.38073	32.2539
KW Dinar	3.3184	5.43183	2.00682	4.73185	394.633
BF Dinar	0.3770	4.34216	1.60436	3.76501	315.368
CY Pound	2.037	3.3336	1.2313	2.9864	242.121

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	350.8	351.3
Silver (oz's)	4.71	4.73
Platinum (oz's)	355.95	356.95
AL (3 Months)	1628	1631
CU (3 Months)	2282	2283
Zinc (3 Months)	1150	1152
Lead (3 Months)	711	712
NI (3 Months)	7270	7300

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Currency	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	9-Month	1-Year
USD	5.30	5.40	5.50	5.75	5.93
GBP	6.18	6.06	6.19	6.33	6.50
JPY	0.33	0.34	0.34	0.35	0.36
DEM	2.88	2.84	2.84	2.84	2.84
FRF	3.23	3.25	3.21	3.20	3.20
CHF	1.50	1.65	1.68	1.68	1.77
ITL	7.21	8.99	8.70	8.51	8.28

Main Equity Indices					
Bourse	Index	Value	Chg	% Chg	High
New York	DOW JONES	6818.86	-65.04	-0.94	6888.13
New York	S&P 500	782.04	-0.68	-0.09	784.79
London	FT-SE 100	4219.1	23.8	0.56	4227.5
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18013.88	655.72	3.78	18066
Paris	CAC 40	2442.46	32.58	1.35	2450.34
Frankfurt	DAX	3028.87	51.96	1.75	3041.55

Commodity		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/b's)	134.17	Spot
Cocoa (S/ton)	1347	Spot
Sugar (S/ton)	300.9	Spot
Wheat (S/ton)	132	Spot
Soya (c/b's)	22.43	Spot
Tea (kg/kg)	115	Spot
Barley (S/bsh)	218	Spot
Rice (S/ton)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	0.437	0.438
DE Mark	0.4334	0.4358
CH Franc	0.4498	0.4503
FR Franc	0.1285	0.1291
JP Yen	0.0083	0.0083
NL Guilder	0.3857	0.3876
IT Lira	0.0475	0.0485

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your assets and liabilities well today and then pay your bills, make collections and clear the slate. Get more than one bid for necessary property repairs to ensure that you are getting a fair deal.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take care of your appearance today, and improve it in some way so that you look the part of someone successful. Your barber or beautician could be a real help. See some close friends this evening and you'll feel very happy.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Do something practical for your mate later this evening and get good results. Be careful in motion while on the highway of all kinds. See a person who is qualified to give financial advice so that you can get ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Decide which of your

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY JANUARY 24, 1997

friends can give you the help you need today, then contact that person for any advice. Rely only on yourself where personal aims are concerned and thereby you can handle any difficulties.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Go to a superior who can help you realise greater success in your career today, and get some advice along those lines. Improve your credit rating in some manner and feel confident that you can have extra funds if needed.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You'll find several ways of advancing in your career today, so pick the best and follow it up. Make some careful arrangements for a trip coming up in the days ahead and be enthusiastic with the prospects.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Find a new way to increase your income today. It's there for the taking. Your mate will appreciate your initiative, and you'll gain more affection in the process. Be careful in new deals so that you don't get burned.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Discuss with a clever fellow associate today a plan of action you have in mind. If you both believe in it and work together, you can both gain much prosperity and prestige in the process with much effort.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be more efficient at your coming duties today and you'll benefit more through your efforts. Show a fellow associate how conscientious you are, and you'll get along better together if you are consider-

ate of each others space.

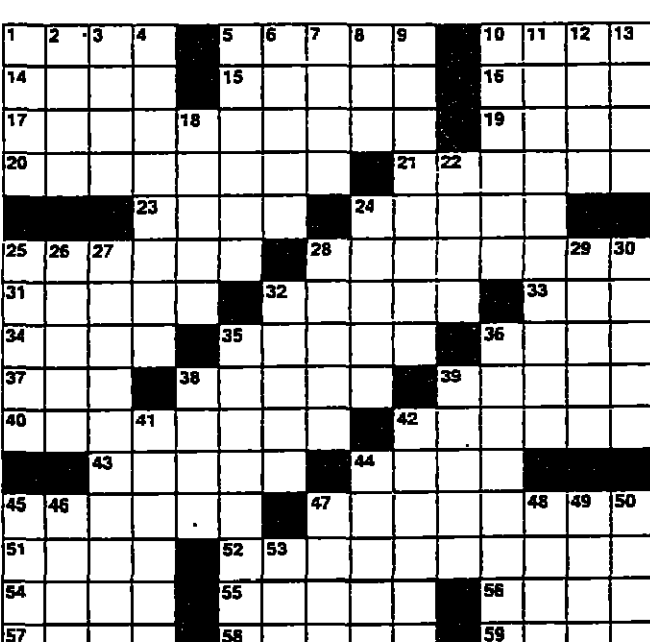
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Check into the costs of a recreation before getting into it today, and be sure your finances will stand the strain. If you dine out tonight with your mate, be sure the food is good and is not too expensive.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get your home arrangements improved early today. Then invite in some charming, conventional friends for the evening and have a pleasant time. Show that you're an excellent host and make them feel comfortable.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get your reports and statements handled today, however, don't rush through them and risk mistakes which could be costly financially and to your reputation. Meet with some supportive friends and discuss a mutual interest.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Boutique
 - Bitter
 - Rocker's gear
 - Verd work
 - Wet thoroughly
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 - Tight group
 - Stumble
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 - Atlanta university
 - Hits hard
 - Mean mongrel
 - Arab robes
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 - Thousandth of an inch
 - Radiation device
 - Victoria and Geneva
 - Incentive
 - Dead ducks
 - Giant
 - Mukluk
 - Certain
 - Trite sayings
 - Very excited
 - Unsuited record
 - Prong
 - Spooky
 - Occupation
 - Multitude
 - Very good
 - Urgent letters



by Richard Thomas

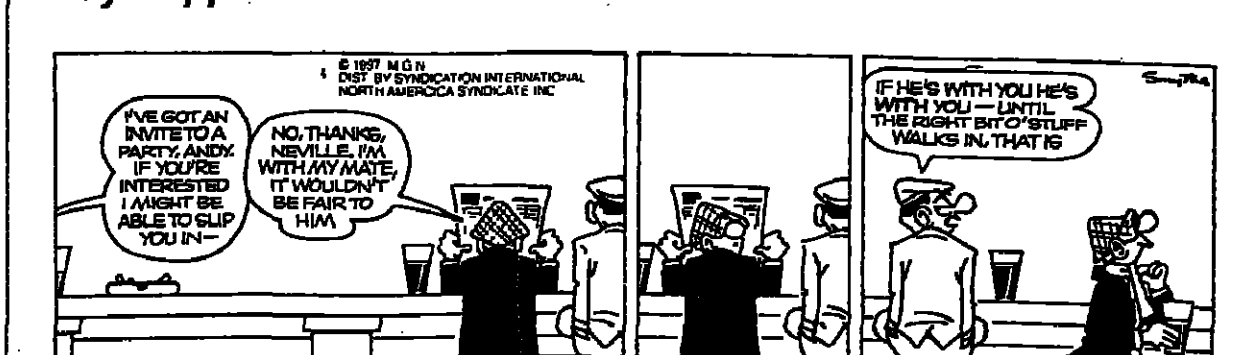
10 Of the stars	11 Baked good	12 Ballet pose	13 Cal. page	14 Blazing	22 Responsibility	24 More wicked	25 Miles of paper	26 Circumference	27 Alliances	28 Annoys	29 More exposed	30 Lock of hair	32 Naval officer	35 Even	36 Spanish scarf	38 Minstrel's	39 Comes into view	41 Undersized	42 Black-footed albatross	44 Queue	45 Descartes' subj.
46 Currency exchange fee	47 Swiss capital	48 Speaker's spot	49 Sicilian mountain	50 Filter through	53 Meadow																

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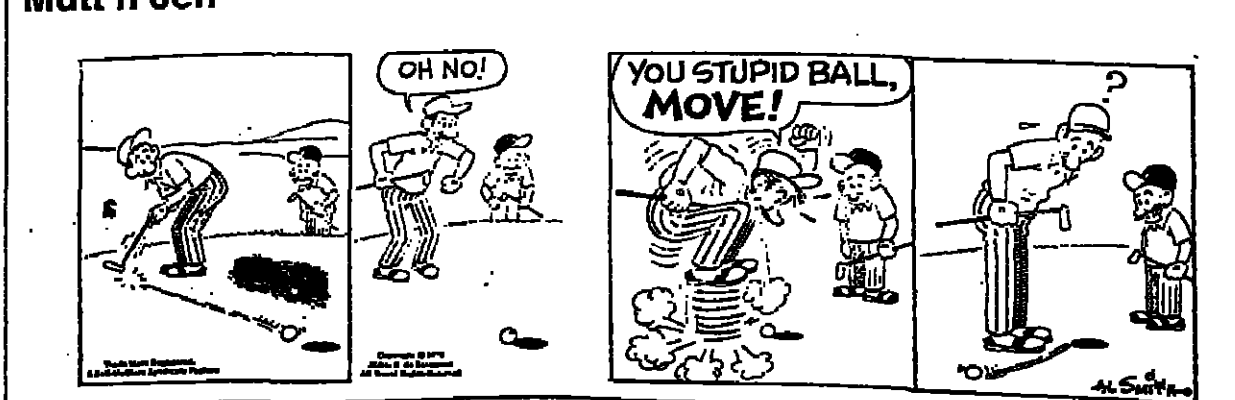
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Richter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Come to an understanding with fellow associates concerning your respective duties and this can become a very productive day today for you. Eliminate stumbling blocks first which are in your path of success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You may disagree with a fellow associate today, however, otherwise it's a very productive time. If you ask a superior for a favour, express yourself clearly and give an honest reason for your request and you could get it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Stop bending your elbow so much today and eliminate other expensive pleasures which are bad for you — physically or financially. Get up early in the morning and get those projects completed which have been put on hold.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you need assistance from an expert today, get it early so you can put it into operation. Don't run off on any tangents this evening.

BECOME A MORE ROMANTIC PERSON AND ALL WILL BE IDEAL WITH YOUR MATE. LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't permit a strange person to force you into doing something today which you do not approve of or keep you from doing something what you had planned. Be cautious all day to adverse conditions.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure to keep any promises you have made to others today, and gain goodwill and favours owed. Your mate has a plan you should go along with, you'll both have fun later this evening while you are in each others company.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Forget about worry and get out to public affairs today which can bring you prestige and knowledge to get any business activities completed. Be sure of the facts and figures in an agreement with a fellow associate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't permit an overly talkative person to hold up your planned activities today, or you'll miss out on a great opportunity. Don't let a personal wish slow you down from getting your career activities completed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Some amusements you desire for after career activities today can be easily enjoyed if you handle your responsibilities first. A good friend can help you show your talents if you take his or her advice to heart.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are enthused about getting your home in better condition. Keep at it and get fine results, don't run off to other matters until you get completed all your tasks. Home is the place for you tonight with your loved ones.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You should not take too much time mulling things over in your mind today, or you could lose out on important business matters. If your mate acts silly later this evening, pay no attention to his or her actions.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Concentrate on bringing in more benefits today, and avoid a critical person. Forget any public tasks, and focus on being practical. Fix fences, however, don't build them at this time or there could be much difficulty.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz.

Bus
Jorda
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phone

By Dominic Evans

AMMAN (R) will announce a telephone licence, bre monopoly which has been in place since mobile were introduced in 1994, said Tuesday.

Yusef Abu director-general of the Telecommunications Commission said the search for an operator aimed to cut costs for phone users.

"Competition is the of the game," he said.

The TRC will announce the tender for the licence, but it is seeking international applications by the end of January.

Those applications will give details of qualifications to operate the system, compatibility with the existing network, and proposed radio spectrum, fees, rates and geographical area covered by the service. Jordan, facing a

Firms di
as Britai
phone nu

LONDON (R) — British businesses expected Tuesday after another overhaul of telecommunications in what is promised to be the final phase of a "future proof" phone network.

Telecommunications today Official announced plans to create billions of new numbers, although Britain has recovered from "phonedel April 1995, when the last of new numbers was created millions of old ones were obsolete.

"These changes mean disruption and cost to businesses," said Simon Sperry, executive of the London Chamber of Commerce. "...Business is bound to be lost because customers ringing the out-number."

Phonelink code telephony British Telecom announced a 100 million pounds (\$100 million).

Each time numbers change companies have to pay thousands of pounds in notification costs and to change stationery and logos on cheques and shopfronts.

London dialling codes now be lengthened by a unit 020 prefix in the year 2000. current London codes of 0 and 0181 will be shortened and 8, respectively, to be dialed after 020.

Northern Ireland, Cardiff (Wales) and the southern English coastal cities of Southampton and Portsmouth will each get a new prefix starting with 02. Prefixes of 03 to 06 being kept for future generations.

In an attempt to quell mounting anger and confusion, O Director General Don Cruikshank, who was once memorably quoted as saying he was "not very good" at forecasting demand for numbers, pledged

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumble words one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words

BADIE				
DOLDY				
GLANJE				
MIRSUQ				

Print answer here:

Australian Open

Sampras sets up clash against Muster

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Pete Sampras fended off a plucky challenge from Spaniard Albert Costa to set up an intriguing semi-final with Austrian warhorse Thomas Muster at the Australian Open tennis here late Wednesday.

The World No.1 was taken to five sets before subduing the persistent 10th seeded Costa, 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 in two hours 52 minutes of riveting tennis to reach the semi-finals here for the fourth time in seven attempts.

Sampras was greatly impressed with the 21-year-old from Barcelona saying he had one of the best backhands he had ever played against.

"I was stunned by a couple of his volleys, he was fast and his racket control was unbelievable, I was amazed at some of the shots he was pulling off, it was phenomenal," said Sampras.

"He'll be top 10 by the end of the year."

Earlier, Muster blasted World No.3 Ivanisevic off the court in just 102 minutes to reach his second Australian Open semi-final.

Muster, seeded five here, deflated Ivanisevic's lethal service, reducing its effectiveness to a lamentable 39 per cent of first serves on the way to securing a 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 win.

Sampras said his semi-final with Muster on Friday will be a war.

"I know Thomas enough to know what he's going to try to do," he said. "I know what to expect and he knows what to expect."



World number one Pete Sampras of the U.S. returns a backhand volley against Albert Costa of Spain during their quarter-final match at the Australian Open. Sampras won in five sets 6-3 6-7 6-1 3-6 6-2 (Reuters photo)

He's playing at a very high level and to beat Goran indoors and in straight sets and he also beat Jim Courier."

It was Sampras' terrific serve that got him home against the persistent Costa.

Sampras was only broken once in the match in

the fourth set when Costa got the packed centre court behind him when he broke to lead 5-3 and then served it out to take the match into a fifth set.

Sampras served 23 aces, but Costa troubled him with marvellous winners off both the forehand and backhand.

"He served unbelievably," said Costa. "I played under pressure because he was serving 20-odd aces and I was always thinking how was I going to break him."

Costa won 21 points on his forehand and 14 on his backhand, while Sampras won the battle of the net.

Sampras hit 23-5 volley winners and was outstanding with the overheads picking up five points.

Muster revealed afterward his game that he had devised a way of beating Ivanisevic through the help of a computer.

"It was my coach's (Ronald Leitgeb) idea and we have just started with it this year," Muster told his press conference.

"Since we are using technology with rackets, we're taking advantage of so many things in tennis I think statistics are very important and it can help you, but it's never going to do the work for you on court."

"I think it's a good thing because everybody has a certain type of play that they like and computers can help you figure out matches and what players usually do and how they play."

It was a brilliant performance by Muster, and an albeit wretched one by Ivanisevic.

"He was a bit tired and he had to take his chances on the second serve and he had to rush and that's where my chances were," said Muster of Ivanisevic's disintegration.

"His first serve percentage dropped and the more second serves he had to play the more chances I had to move him around, and I knew the longer the match lasted the more I would participate in the game."

Muster has emerged as a definite title chance on his improving form. On Monday night Muster snuffed out two-time winner and 11th seed Jim Courier in four sets and took just three sets to wipe out Ivanisevic.

Hingis and Fernandez reach Open semifinals

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Swiss teenager Martina Hingis was one match away from her first Grand Slam final Wednesday after setting up a semi-final with a veteran who has lost three finals.

The 16-year-old fourth seed brushed aside Romanian Irina Spirlea 7-5, 6-2 in a 70-minute quarter-final encounter on a centre court, sheltered from chilly rain by its retractable roof.

Earlier the hushed crowd watched the dream run of gallant Dominique Van Roost collapse in tears and pain as the unseeded Belgian retired from her quarter-final in agony with a pulled stomach muscle.

She quit after an hour as American 14th seed Mary Joe Fernandez was leading 7-5, 4-0.

"I was feeling so much pain ... I hate to stop but it was just too much hurting for me today," said a pale Van Roost, who has been fighting the abdominal muscle problem for a week.

Hingis became the first Swiss woman to reach the Australian Open semifinals and is bidding to become the youngest Grand Slam singles champion in the open era which started in 1968.

Monica Seles won the 1990 French Open at 16 years and six months, while Hingis is almost 16 years and four months.

The 25-year-old Fernandez was herself a teenage tennis sensation reaching her first Grand Slam semi-final when she was 17.

Between 1989 and 1993 Fernandez lost two Australian finals and one French final and played in five semifinals.

Asked if having been in the last two rounds of the Australian Open before would give her an edge, Fernandez said: "Hopefully a little bit."

"Whenever you have been there before it gives you a little more confidence, she said.

"I lost to Hingis last week so it is going to be tough for me," she added.

In her quarter-final, the Swiss player came back strong after early problems following a fall from a horse while riding Tuesday.

"It was pretty funny actually, it wasn't a bad fall, I just fell over the head of the horse and I made a roll, I did gymnastics when I was younger," Hingis told the media.

Spirlea broke Hingis early in the first set and the Swiss girl trailed 3-2 before she broke back.

She recovered to claim the opening set in 43 minutes when she had Spirlea 5-6 and 15-40 down on service.

Eighth-seeded Spirlea broke Hingis in the first service game of the second set but was broken in the fourth game. Two further service breaks helped give Hingis the match.

"There's still so many good players around, especially in the semi-finals. I don't think that just anybody can win a Grand Slam, it always must be a champion," said Hingis.

South African Amanda Coetzer and Mary Pierce of France will play in the other semi-final.

Van roost's previous best Grand Slam performance was to reach the fourth round in the 1992 Australian Open when she was Dominique Monami.

She reached the last eight this time after topping Spanish second-seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and 15th seeded American Chanda Rubin.

The gallant 23-year-old won the second and final set of her match with Rubin despite a painful back muscle injury.

In her first quarter-final, Van Roost scored with hard deep shots on both sides, but Fernandez broke through in the 11th game.

The muscle injury bit in the second set and Van Roost only managed four games before she slumped in a court-side chair.

Matthaeus/Klinsmann dispute divides Bayern

MUNICH (AFP) — The war of words between Bayern Munich's star striker Jurgen Klinsmann and team captain Lothar Matthaeus has effected the morale of the entire club, veteran defender Thomas Helmer told the local press here Wednesday.

"It weighs heavily on the whole team," Helmer told daily newspaper "Bild".

"Talking is not going to resolve the Matthaeus/Klinsmann problem," he added.

The dispute between the two players erupted last year when Matthaeus, the former captain of the national side, accused Klinsmann of having convinced German coach Bert Vogts to drop him for Euro 96.

The defender launched a further attack on December 19 when he said Klinsmann should quit the team because "only players who are happy add something at the highest levels."

Helmer went so far as to say that current coach Giovanni Trapattoni could also be driven to retirement.

"He has placed himself under enormous pressure," said Helmer.

"It's for that reason that I wouldn't exclude the possibility of him saying 'I'm splitting' in the case that we fail to win the championship," he added.

MISSING

A maid called Elsadomandab who works for its employer has been missing since January 2, 1997 and has not appeared yet. Those who have any information about her shall contact the nearest police station and who conceals any information will be posted responsible before the law.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH A LEADING NGO

Position:

Manager of Ceramics Factory

Qualifications:

1. University degree in Business Administration/Industrial Engineering or related field.
2. Minimum five years management experience, preferably in a private sector factory.
3. Ability to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate a strategic plan to revitalise a ceramics factory with emphasis on product quality, marketability, and competitiveness.
4. Ability to establish targets and achieve results.
5. Strong interpersonal skills; ability to motivate people and work in a team.
6. Computer skills desirable.
7. Fluency in English.

Attractive salary and benefits package available. Applications must be received no later than February 1, 1997, and directed to:

The Executive Director,
P.O. Box 5118,
Amman - 11183, Jordan.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH A LEADING NGO

Position:

Junior Sales Promoter/Marketing Specialist

Qualifications:

1. University degree in a business-related field.
2. Proven experience and success in domestic product promotion/sales. Regional sales experience highly desirable.
3. Ability to assist in the development and implementation of a market driven promotion strategy.
4. Strong interpersonal skills, professional presentation, and the ability to work in a team.
5. Computer skills desirable.
6. Fluency in English.

Attractive salary and benefits package available. Applications must be received no later than February 1, 1997, and directed to:

The Executive Director,
P.O. Box 5118,
Amman - 11183, Jordan.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH A LEADING NGO

Position:

Senior Export Promoter/Marketing Specialist

Qualifications:

1. University degree in Marketing/Advertising or other business-related field. Masters degree is highly desirable.
2. Proven experience and success in international and domestic product promotion.
3. Experience in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a marketing plan which emphasises a market driven approach to product design, production and distribution.
4. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a team.
5. Computer skills desirable.
6. Fluency in English.

Attractive salary and benefits package available. Applications must be received no later than February 1, 1997, and directed to:

The Executive Director,
P.O. Box 5118,
Amman - 11183, Jordan.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY WITH A LEADING NGO

Position:

Director of Income Generating Activities

Qualifications:

1. University degree in Business Administration/Finance or other business-related field.
2. Minimum five years managerial experience, preferably in a private sector factory.
3. Experience in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects which emphasise international and domestic product marketing, competitiveness and profitability.
4. Strong interpersonal skills which foster positive building practices.
5. Computer skills desirable.
6. Fluency in English.

Attractive salary and benefits package available. Applications must be received no later than February 1, 1997, and directed to:

The Executive Director,
P.O. Box 5118,
Amman - 11183, Jordan.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "1"

Steve Martin..... in
SGT. BILKO

Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "2"

A Rob Cohen film
Sylvester Stallone ... in
Daylight

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA

Mahmoud Abdul Aziz...in
The Gentleman
(Arabic)

Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER...in
ERASER
Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Coming Soon... "Custom made Citizen"
The satirical play starring Mousa Hijazin

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155

Ramadan specials
by Nabil & Hisham
starting Jan. 22
Wed., Thurs., & Fri.
For reservations please call
640155, 625155

Norway's Atle Skjold
the upcoming World
155.78 minutes and
Strobl Reuters photo

Compagnie

CORINNA D'AMPEZ
The next
days could end a decade-
long wait for the
Compagnie, winner of
women's giant slalom
titles last week.

Since her first appearance
on the Alpine skiing world
cup circuit as a teenage
prodigy, the former super-
olympic gold medalist
has won Olympic and world
champion titles in her native
France.

But once from the
podium, she has plagued
by a recent form
that has come.

During the winter
games of the rich
nations in Italy, first
down on the Olympic
Piste, she followed by
super slalom on Fri-
day and giant slalom on Sat-
urday.

That should give the
Swiss skier a chance to
claim the Santa Caterina
Alpine Cup, which leads the
women's World Cup stand-
ing. She is 500 points ahead
of Austrian Anna Wachter
after five races, at least
three excellent chances.

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For details, please

DUBAI ELECTRICITY

INVITES

DBA/ANALYST

Documentation must include
modification, upgrade and
database systems.

Handling day-to-day
performance, monitoring
and support now be

Logical and physical mode

Oracle security admini

A DBA Analyst, candi

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Applications (with copies

Andez reach nifinals

In her quarter-final, the Swiss player back strong after early problems following a fall from a horse while riding Tuesday.

"It was pretty funny actually, it wasn't bad, I just fell over the head of the horse," said Hingis. "I had a good fall, it was a good fall." Hingis said the incident was a "good fall" and she was "not hurt".

Spilka broke Hingis' serve in the first set and the Swiss put it back 1-2 before she broke back.

She recovered to claim the opening set 1-0 minutes when she had Spilka 5-0, 2-40 down on service.

Eighty-seeded Spilka took Hingis' first service game of the second set but broke in the fourth game. Two further break breaks helped give Hingis the match.

"There's still so much to be played," said Hingis. "I'm not sure if I'm a good player, but I think I'm a good player."

South African Amanda Coetzer and France's Arnaud Boesman will play in the other semi-final.

Van Rossum's previous best Grand Slam performance was to reach the fourth round in 1992 Australian Open when she lost to Steffi Graf.

She reached the last eight this time despite a painful back muscle injury.

In her first quarter-final, Van Rossum won with hard deep shots on both sides.

The muscle injury forced her to stop playing in the second round.

Van Rossum only managed to win four of her first six games.

She slumped in her last two games.

mann dispute ayern

In Bayern Munich's season, the highest has effected the team's performance.

A local press here, the Bayern Munich daily, has reported that the team's performance has been affected by the dispute.

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Norway's Atle Skaardal is on his way to clock the fastest time in the practice for the upcoming World Cup downhill races in Kitzbuehel. Skaardal clocked a time of 1:55.78 minutes and was fastest ahead of Luc Alphand of France and Austria's Fritz Strobl (Reuters photo)

Compagnoni chases 1st Italian win

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (R) — The next four days could end a decade-long wait for Deborah Compagnoni, winner of two women's giant slaloms in Germany last week.

Since her first appearance on the Alpine skiing world cup circuit as a teenager in 1987, the former super-giant Olympic gold medalist and reigning Olympic and world giant slalom champion has never won in her native Italy.

But, free from the many injuries that have plagued her for years, recent form suggests the time has come.

Cortina, the winter playground of the rich and famous in Italy, first hosts a downhill on the Olympia Delle Tofane Piste on Thursday followed by a super-giant slalom on Friday and two giants at the weekend.

That should give the 26-year-old from Santa Caterina Valfurva, who leads the giant slalom World Cup standings on 360 points ahead of Austrian Anita Wachter on 320 after five races, at least three excellent chances.

The resort has already had plenty of sporting success to cheer about this season as the home town of men's downhill star Kristian Ghedina, winner of three world cup races, and a Compagnoni win would be the icing on the cake.

"I'm really hoping to win there," Compagnoni said at the weekend of Cortina, where she finished second in a giant in 1994 after a third place in a giant the previous year.

"I have never won in Italy before and it would be beautiful to break the ice before Sestriere."

The World Championships start in the Italian resort of Sestriere on February 2 and, with a struggling Alberto Tomba largely absent from the pistes so far this season, Compagnoni and Ghedina have been keeping the hosts' hopes high.

"Deborah, perfection exists," declared an ecstatic headline in the Gazzetta dello Sport at the weekend.

Her name will not figure in Thursday's downhill, a race sure to renew the battle

between the overall World Cup leader Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden and Germany's Katja Seizinger.

The Swede, still chasing the first downhill win of her career, goes into the four races with a 328 point lead over the defending overall champion who prefers the speed events and should narrow the gap between the two.

Wiberg has won two super-Gs and two slaloms so far this season as well as finishing third in a giant — her best result in the discipline since 1993 — and can also put up a good fight in downhill with a second place here last year.

Germany's Hilde Gerg, second in a downhill in Austria earlier in the month after winning a Super-G at Val d'Isere in December, will also be looking for a first downhill win.

The weather in Cortina could be a big factor in the race with Tuesday's downhill training postponed and then abandoned as snow and then heavy fog made any runs impossible. The forecast for Thursday is more encouraging however.

Two training runs were due on Wednesday.

The programme originally envisaged three races but a second giant slalom, which could not be held in the French resort of Morzine in December due to soft snow, was added.

CHICAGO (R) — Michael Jordan scored an NBA season-high 51 points, including two clutch jumpers in the final 67 seconds, as the Chicago Bulls continued their decade-long dominance of the New York Knicks with an 88-87 victory on Tuesday.

Jordan shot 18-of-30 from the field as he had his second 50-point game of the season and 36th of his career.

Playing without starters Dennis Rodman and Ron Harper, the Bulls bounced back from Sunday's 16-point loss at Houston and turned away the Knicks in the first meeting between the teams this season.

"This was like a playoff game," Jordan said. "It was a playoff atmosphere and we expected it. We were able to hold them off down the stretch, minus our big rebounder. I thought the guys did a heck of a job."

Patrick Ewing had 19 points and 14 rebounds for the Knicks.

In Charlotte, Glen Rice scored a season-high 42 points, leading the Charlotte Hornets to just their third victory over the Houston Rockets, 114-108.

Rice, who added eight rebounds, has led the Hornets in scoring in 13 straight games. The Hornets have won five of their last six games but defeated the rockets for just the third time in 20 meetings.

"It was a physical game tonight and we wanted to be aggressive tonight," Rice said.

Dell Curry added 23 points off the bench and Anthony Mason recorded 19 points and nine rebounds as the Hornets shot 50 per cent (38-for-76) from the field.

Clyde Drexler scored 39 points and Hakeem Olajuwon 26.

At the Warriors, Latrell

Jordan scores 51 points as Bulls beat Knicks Rockets, Hawks, Mavs lose



Michael Jordan

Sprewell scored 16 of his 46 points in the fourth quarter as the Golden State Warriors defeated the Dallas Mavericks, 105-93.

"I've seen a lot of guys score points, but he seemed to do the little things that we needed in order to hold on to this game," said Warriors coach Rick Adelman, about Sprewell.

Joe Smith had 21 points and Mullin added 18 for Golden State, which improved to 9-10 at home.

In Miami, Tim Hardaway had 24 points and 11 assists and made two clutch three-pointers in the final two minutes as the Miami Heat snapped the 10-game winning streak of the Atlanta Hawks with a 94-91 victory.

The Hawks entered the fourth quarter trailing 74-65, but closed to 88-86 with 2:21 remaining on a jumper by Steve Smith, who scored 22 points. Hardaway responded with

a three-pointer with 1:56 left, boosting Miami's lead to five points. Hardaway hit another three-pointer with 1:04 to go, giving the Heat a 94-88 advantage.

In Milwaukee, Rik Smits scored a season-high 25 points and grabbed nine rebounds and the Indiana Pacers withstood poor foul shooting down the stretch to defeat the Milwaukee Bucks, 92-89.

Derrick McKey and Reggie Miller had 14 points apiece for the Pacers.

Glenn Robinson scored 29 points and Vin Baker had 22 and 14 rebounds for the Bucks, who failed to hit the rim on three attempts to either tie the game or take the lead in the final 3.2 seconds.

In Orlando, Rony Seikaly scored 26 points and had a pair of key blocked shots in the final seconds as the Orlando Magic won for the fifth time in their last six games with a 93-88 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Penny Hardaway had 19 points and Derek Strong added 13 and nine rebounds for the Magic.

Rod Strickland scored 23 points and Juwan Howard added 20 for the Bullets, who have dropped two straight and five of their

last six games.

In Portland, Cliff Robinson scored 10 of his 23 points in the third quarter and Kenny Anderson added 15 points and 12 assists, leading the Portland Trail Blazers to a 100-82 victory over the slumping Los Angeles Clippers.

Arvydas Sabonis had 17 points and Gary Trent contributed 13 for Portland, which has won nine of its last 11 games.

"We played from ahead for a change and that was good against this team," Portland coach P.J. Carlesimo said. "You don't want to get them into a position where they start getting confidence."

In Toronto, Walt Williams scored 20 of his 32 points in the first half and fuelled a 9-0 run that closed the third quarter and propelled the Toronto Raptors to a 118-106 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Carlos Rogers scored 24 points and rookie Marcus Camby added 23 for the Raptors.

The Raptors got 12 points and 17 assists from Damon Stoudamire and 17 points from Doug Christie.

NBA RESULTS

Toronto	118	Minnesota	106
Charlotte	114	Houston	108
Miami	94	Atlanta	91
Orlando	93	Washington	88
Chicago	88	New York	87
Indiana	92	Milwaukee	89
Portland	100	LA Clippers	82
Golden State	105	Dallas	93

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U.S. says it is time to give Netanyahu credit

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The U.S. ambassador to Israel said on Tuesday it was time to "suspend disbelief" and give Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu credit for committing his government to peace with the Arabs.

But Ambassador Martin Indyk voiced concern that the United States had become a crutch to Israelis and Palestinians in peace talks that last week climaxed in a self-rule deal for the volatile West Bank town of Hebron.

"It is time to suspend disbelief and to credit the prime minister with the courage that he has demonstrated in making this agreement, in passing it through the cabinet and in implementing it expeditiously," Mr. Indyk told reporters in the Foreign Press Association.

In doing so, "the new government of Israel has committed itself to the peace process," said the ambassador, who described the protracted U.S.-brokered talks in which he took part as "brutal."

The Arab World had questioned Mr. Netanyahu's commitment to peace following his election eight months ago on a promise to bolster Israeli security and to oppose exchanging occupied Arab territory for peace.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's Hebron deal with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat carried out last Friday, Israel gave self-rule to most of the West Bank town, ending 30 years of occupation.

Mr. Indyk appealed to Arab states, including Syria and Lebanon, to use Hebron as a springboard to further peacemaking. He said he had seen signs already of a thaw in Israel's relations with Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Oman.

"When Yasser Arafat calls Bibi Netanyahu his friend and partner, then why shouldn't the others do the same?" Mr. Indyk asked.

Mr. Netanyahu had reciprocated Mr. Arafat's comments by praising the Palestinian leader's moderation. Mr. Indyk said, adding: "One has a sense that something has changed."

He said Washington sought to lower its profile in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, preferring that the two sides make commitments to each other rather than to the United

States. Washington was forced at first to play an intermediary role because of a lack of trust between the two sides — but this had a price.

"In many ways we became a crutch to the parties," he said.

He recalled that after the two sides had agreed on a written summary of their meeting neither Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai or Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abd Rabbo would sign.

So, U.S. mediator Dennis Ross wound up initialing the agreement.

"That is typical of the role we have come to play. That is not the role we should play now," said Mr. Indyk.

In a meeting with Arab foreign journalists Tuesday, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy urged the Arab World to warm relations, saying "that is the incentive for the peace process, and not the opposite."

"If the response to every debate will be the freezing of normalisation... then we turn ourselves and the peace into hostages," Mr. Levy said.

Mr. Indyk confirmed that a U.S. diplomatic campaign was underway in the Arab World and other world capitals to put new life in the broader peace effort and restart negotiations with Syria.

"I think that those in the Arab World who have been parties to the peace process... should now reengage in a way that will enable us to use the Hebron agreement as a springboard for the peace process," said Mr. Indyk.

During 14 weeks of exhausting negotiations, the ambassador said, the Israeli and Palestinian leaders as well as their negotiators and military commanders forged relationships.

After an off-duty Israeli soldier opened fire on Palestinian shoppers in a Hebron market on Jan. 1, the two sides rushed to contain the emotions and prevent violence, he recalled.

In another example, the Israelis allowed Palestinian undercover police into the city to contain anti-Israeli reactions, and Mr. Arafat cancelled a national day speech to a crowd of 10,000 that could have inflamed tensions, Mr. Indyk said.

Bouez says Lebanon cannot try Iraqi diplomats

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Paris Bouez on Wednesday rejected appeals against the release of three Iraqi diplomats held in connection with the murder of an opponent of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Two days ago a Lebanese investigative judge ordered the release of the three diplomats, Mohammad Kazem, Ali Darwish and Hadi Hassan on a bail of 50,000 Lebanese pounds (\$32) each.

"Our opinion, based on all international jurisprudence and laws, is that Lebanon as a host country can cut diplomatic relations and kick out the diplomats and consider them persona non-grata but it cannot try them," Mr. Bouez said.

The three, who have not yet been released, have been held without trial at Lebanon's biggest jail at Roumieh since their arrest immediately after the April 12, 1994 killing of Iraqi dissident Taleb Souheil.

The murder of Souheil, an opponent of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, brought a swift rupture in diplomatic ties between Baghdad and Beirut which ordered the closure of the Iraqi embassy.

Souheil, who held Jordanian and Saudi passports, was a leading member of the London-based Council for a Free Iraq.

Lebanese authorities said in 1995 they were waiting for a reply by Lebanon's Foreign Ministry on whether the suspects were listed as diplomats or non-diplomatic staff.

Judicial sources said Souheil's widow on Tuesday appealed to a judicial committee against the decision to bail out the diplomats and a Lebanese shopowner who is also accused of links to her husband's murder.

A fourth diplomat, commercial attaché Khaled Khalaf who was also arrested in connection with the murder, died in custody of a brain haemorrhage in June 1995. He had not faced trial.

Jordan on Tuesday strongly condemned the Lebanese decision to free the three Iraqi diplomats.

Awn Khasawneh, chief of the Royal Court, summoned Lebanese Ambassador to Jordan William Habib on Tuesday evening to hand over a formal complaint on the issue, the AFP reported.

"The freeing of criminals is a violation of Lebanon's engagement to fight terrorism and its commitment to justice," said the statement addressed to Lebanon's government.

Mr. Habib expressed "astonishment" at the protest.

He said Lebanon had simply "recognised that the three Iraqis benefited from diplomatic status and as a result could only be expelled because their government failed to lift their diplomatic immunity."

Mr. Habib said the suspects would not be "freed," something that would imply their innocence, but "extradited."

Byzantine cross unearthed

A SMALL bronze cross with inlaid wood is held by an archaeologist on Wednesday at the site below the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem where it was dug up last week.

The cross dates from the Byzantine era, roughly between the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., and is of particular interest because it is the first cross to be unearthed with wooden pieces in it.

The cross was excavated from an area outside the Old City walls below the Jaffa Gate during a \$5-million excavation from the Old City walls to the Mamilla housing project.

The archaeologist in charge of the project, Rony Reich, said he does not believe the inlaid wooden pieces were part of the Holy Cross of Jesus (Reuters photo)



Former House Speaker Shreideh passes away

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Wednesday announced the death of former Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdullah Kleib Shreideh.

His family said he was 120. Shreideh was also a member of the Upper House of Parliament and a former minister.

Shreideh received his education at Tibnehin-Irbid Governorate, before moving to Irbid town to learn at Al Rashadi School in 1896 and later at Al Anbar School in Syria where he studied along with Subhi Abu Ghanimeh, Khalaf Al Tel, Khalaf Mohammad, Mustafa Wahbi Tel, Saeed Al Mufti, and Sameh Hijazi.

He returned home in 1914 and became a tribal chief in the Kufri Alma village. When he was 21, he formed a 200-member secret army to support the Great Arab Revolt.

Shreideh was sentenced to 10 years in prison during the Turkish reign but the late King Abdullah pardoned him after one year.

In 1929 he joined the first legislative council along with Oklah Mohammad, Najib Abul Shaer, Mohammad Harhashi, Rufeian Majali, and Mahmud Khreishan.

In 1941 he was appointed as minister of agriculture and customs. Then King Abdullah appointed him as a member of the Upper House of Parliament.

King Hussein appointed Mr. Shreideh as minister of state. Later on he was elected as speaker of the Lower House.

He passed away on Wednesday at his home in Amman.

He was buried in the Al Rasheed cemetery in Amman.

He was a member of the Jordanian Engineers' Association (JEA), could be released through government intervention before the Eid Al Fitr holiday, which falls in

early February. The continued detention of Mr. Istanbuli has also drawn severe condemnation from the JEA as well as the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR).

Mazen Rial, another member of the JEA who has been campaigning for the release of Mr. Istanbuli since he was arrested on Dec. 26, said that Israeli authorities had not offered any explanation for the arrest and had kept the engineer incommunicado for the first 15 days.

"It now appears that he was arrested for his political beliefs," said Mr. Rial. He

initially dismissed, gained credence with the eruption of the so-called Susurluk affair in November, when the former police chief, a Turkish mafia boss and a Kurdish deputy of Mrs. Ciller's party were all found together in a car that crashed.

Agar was forced to resign over the scandal. In Ankara, Mr. Akbel said: "A protest note was submitted to the German embassy last night and another note was presented to the German Foreign Ministry in Bonn."

"Our ambassador in Bonn is writing a letter to Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and we have formally asked Germany to give an explanation," he added.

Mr. Baybasin's allegations, him a year later, the Netherlands gave Mr. Baybasin refugee status and refused to extradite him to Turkey. He has remained in the Netherlands.

Mr. Baybasin has made sensational claims since his release, telling the Turkish press that he had belonged to a "gang" within the government since the 1980s, even transporting drugs in military vehicles.

He has also implicated several political figures, such as former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar, whom he has accused of dealing in heroin. Ozer Ciller, the foreign minister's husband, who he said laundered drug money, Mr. Baybasin's allegations,

Pretoria puts off decision on arms for Syria

PRETORIA (Agencies) — The South African government announced Wednesday it would hold international consultations, including with the United States, before taking a final decision on the sale of military equipment to Syria.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki told a press conference here after the first cabinet meeting of the year that he would be personally in charge of the consultations.

"We want to talk to all these important players and then come back to cabinet," Mr. Mbeki said.

"In terms of the international players, one is the United States," he said, but declined to name the others.

Both the United States and Israel have condemned South Africa for planning to go through with a \$641 million deal to supply tank weapons firing systems to Syria.

The United States, which accuses Syria of supporting terrorism, has threatened to cut aid to South Africa if the deal goes ahead.

Washington's comments drew a heated response from President Nelson Mandela, who has said South Africa will not allow other countries to dictate its foreign policy and that it will go ahead with the deal if it is in the country's interest.

South Africa says it is just one of several countries, including three unnamed European countries, which are bidding for the \$650 million contract. It also asserts that a U.S. defence contractor is involved in at least one of those bids.

Defence analysts say any major NATO power has the technology to produce the equipment which would improve and modernise the targeting ability of Soviet-built T-72 tanks, of which Syria has well over 1,000.

The electronic system provides computerised control of the mechanism that aims and fires the cannon in tanks and howitzers, making them many times more accurate — something that has raised fears in Israel.

While Washington says it would have no option but to cut off aid worth \$120 million this year if the deal went ahead, South Africa in turn accuses the United States of hypocrisy for not acting against the U.S. contractor bidding for the deal.

Attempting to cool passions, U.S. ambassador to South Africa James Joseph on Tuesday denied the Clinton administration was threatening South Africa and called for the matter to be resolved through diplomatic channels.

After Hebron deal, U.S. says rest is up to parties involved

From Lamis Andoni in Boston

HAVING SECURED the Hebron agreement, the U.S. will not pursue its hands-on policy in the Palestinian-Israeli talks and will leave it to both sides to figure out the way to proceed towards the final status talks, according to American administration officials.

The officials also said that the U.S. should not be expected to interfere to enforce any steps and the two sides will have to negotiate the details.

"The U.S. has played a critical role but it is essential for the Palestinians and the Israelis to accommodate each others terms and concerns," a well-placed administration official told Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times.

Other administration sources said that the parties should not expect the U.S. to enforce the agreements. "There are no guarantees," one source said.

Palestinians had agreed to sign the protocol only after the U.S. gave them assurances that Israel will withdraw from rural areas in the West Bank. But officials say that the assurances were similar to the letters of assurances that former Secretary of State James Baker gave Israel and the Arab governments concerned to enter the peace process launched in Madrid in 1991.

Mr. Baker's letters of assurances mainly stated that the Middle East peace process will be based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The letters, which included different interpretations of 242 depending on the parties they were addressed to, had secured the attendance of all parties involved. However, the letters, as American officials later explained to the disappointment of some Arabs who were hoping that Washington will enforce the implementation of 242, were mostly a statement of the American position.

In the case of the Hebron protocol the American assurances were contained in one

letter without any variations but the Americans are now also saying that it was mostly a statement of the American position and not guarantees.

But American officials stress that the letter was close to the Israeli position on the withdrawals. The main point of the letter was that the U.S. stated that it was Israel's responsibility to determine the "military locations" that it would keep and the parameters of Israeli withdrawal.

The wording of the letter gave rise to different interpretations. American supporters of the Likud Party immediately saw as a green light to Israel to define the size and the nature of the withdrawal. New York columnist Abe Rosenthal, who is known to be close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said that the only reason that he welcomed the Hebron agreement was the American position contained in the letter of assurance. In his view the letter of assurance gave Israel the right to maintain control over as much of the land it needs as it enters the final status negotiations.

Asked if Washington supported Israel's self-declared right to determine the land it would want to keep under its control, American administration sources said that this could be one interpretation.

Asked if such interpretation could leave any room for the implementation of 242 at the final status negotiations, the sources said the U.S. did not want to speculate about the future negotiations.

Meanwhile, the American media have enthusiastically welcomed the Hebron agreement, running editorials and commentaries explaining the Israeli side and indicating that the ball was in the Arab court. Above everything, American commentators and officials have repeatedly implied that it was now the Arab governments' turn to accelerate the normalisation process.

between the traffickers and the Turkish government.

The heroin traffic between Turkey and Western Europe was controlled by the Senoglu and Baybasin families of Istanbul, who were "covered" by the Turkish government. Both had "excellent relations" with the Turkish government and "personal contacts" with Mrs. Ciller, presiding Judge Rolf Schwabbe said.

This fact had seriously complicated investigations, he said.

Another of the trial judges, Dox Neveling, said the court was convinced of the findings of the investigation.

Asked about any political repercussions resulting from the accusation, he said: "That can happen, but we have nothing to fear."

In Bonn, a spokesman for the Turkish embassy said the Turkish ambassador had spoken Tuesday evening about "this difficult matter" with German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

Mr. Neveling, who is in charge of drawing up the official account of the trial, said the political background to the case emerged after an attempt to smuggle eight kilograms of heroin into Germany through Frankfurt airport in 1995.

According to the judge, the influence of the Senoglu and Baybasin families reaches to the highest government circles.

"Among others, Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller was named by the prosecution," Mr. Neveling said.

The court Tuesday sentenced a Turk, an Italian and a Belgian to prison sentences of five to nine years for bringing the eight kilos of heroin into Germany from Istanbul, after a trial lasting three months.

The Baybasin family is a Kurdish clan from Lice, a small city in southeastern Diyarbakir province that is considered Turkey's heroin production capital.

Interpol arrested its leader, Huseyin Baybasin, 41, in late 1995 in the Netherlands for drug trafficking. Releasing

him a year later, the Netherlands gave Mr. Baybasin refugee status and refused to extradite him to Turkey. He has remained in the Netherlands.

Mr. Baybasin has made sensational claims since his release, telling the Turkish press that he had belonged to a "gang" within the government since the 1980s, even transporting drugs in military vehicles.

He has also implicated several political figures, such as former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar, whom he has accused of dealing in heroin. Ozer Ciller, the foreign minister's husband, who he said laundered drug money, Mr. Baybasin's allegations,

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"Our ambassador in Bonn is writing a letter to Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and we have formally asked Germany to give an explanation," he added.

Mr. Baybasin's allegations,

Column 8

No comeback for Gorbachev yet

MOSCOW (AP) — No political comeback for Mikhail Gorbachev — not yet, anyway. A spokesman for the former Soviet president denied a report Tuesday that he is contemplating running for the state Duma, or lower house of parliament.

Vladimir Polyakov told the Associated Press that Gorbachev has no such plans. That squelched a rumour circulating in the Ural Mountains, where an official said Gorbachev's supporters were already collecting signatures in his support.

Gorbachev's dream of returning to the Kremlin office he was forced out of in 1991 was crushed in June when he received just 0.51 per cent of the vote in the presidential election, finishing seventh out of 10 candidates.

Lionised abroad for ending the Communist Party's totalitarian grip on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Gorbachev is still blamed by Russians for the turmoil and hardship set in motion by the Soviet collapse.

Pollack sues Danish television

COPENHAGEN (AP) — Win or lose, filmmaker Sydney Pollack says, he hopes his suit against Danish public television will send a message to Hollywood. Pollack is suing the Danish channel for showing his "Three Days of the Condor" in a format that chopped out about half the image. The movie was filmed in a wide-screen cinematograph, which has proportions different from those of the nearly-square television screen.

Showing such films on TV requires either cropping off much of the image or showing it in the original proportions with black bands at the top and bottom of the screen — the "letter-box" format.

Pollack said Tuesday that Hollywood discourages TV viewers from accepting the letter-box format because it is increasingly tailoring films for TV. The suit was filed at his urging by the association of Danish film directors. It seeks 100,000 kroner (\$17,240) in damages and a ban on TV screening of Pollack's films in any but the original format.

Gorilla adopts abandoned newborn

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Alberta the gorilla spreads her love around. She adopted a baby lowland gorilla abandoned by its young mother after birth Saturday at the San Diego Wild Animal Park.

Alberta responded to the baby's hungry cries by picking it up and nursing it, even though she is already caring for her own 10-month-old baby. It was only the second time on record that a mother gorilla in captivity assumed caretaking responsibilities for another's newborn, park spokeswoman Debra Dunbar said Monday. And it is unlikely that biological mother penny could get her baby back even if she wanted.

Defence analysts say any major NATO power has the technology to produce the equipment which would improve and modernise the targeting ability of Soviet-built T-72 tanks, of which Syria has well over 1,000.

The electronic system provides computerised control of the mechanism that aims and fires the cannon in tanks and howitzers, making them many times more accurate — something that has raised fears in Israel.

While Washington says it would have no option but to cut off aid worth \$120 million this year if the deal went ahead, South Africa in turn accuses the United States of hypocrisy for not acting against the U.S. contractor bidding for the deal.

Attempting to cool passions, U.S. ambassador to South Africa James Joseph on Tuesday denied the Clinton administration was threatening South Africa and called for the matter to be resolved through diplomatic channels.

Runaway rhea nabbed

KNOXVILLE (AP) — Tommy prince was working in his yard when he heard footsteps in the woods behind his house in Knoxville, in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

"I looked up and it was an EMU or an ostrich," Prince said. Not at all. It was a runaway rhea, a tall, three-toed bird that looks like a smallish ostrich. The flightless South American bird turned out to be fleet footed: it took two hours Monday before one of Prince's neighbours nabbed it. "He got in a thicker and when he got tangled up, I grabbed him and just hung on," Sharon Howard said. "It took everything I had to hold him." The rhea was resting comfortably at a vet's office, and the pet's owner was on its way to collect it.

Raytheon secures Egyptian contract

RAYTHEON (AFP) — Raytheon Electronic Systems said Friday it had signed a contract worth \$20 million with the U.S. army on behalf of the government of Egypt for the renovation of F-16 Hawk missiles under contract. Raytheon will do modification kits, upgrade Hawk to the latest configuration, in conjunction with remanufacturing retained portions of equipment to a "like condition." Raytheon will provide spares, training, equipment and technical assistance in Egypt to delivery of the systems.

Israel resun

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Israeli army on Friday handed over houses which it says were still controlled by Palestinian forces. A spokesman said, A Bank town of Jenin, several buildings belonging to Jordan Valley region destroyed some terrorist. The state of demolition Israeli-Palestinian which was sealed last. The Israeli army has buildings which it is mission.

Volume 22

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Relatives demand se

HEBRON (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's first cabinet meeting, his first cabinet meeting, while residents market, third anniversary of the der by a Jewish settler, last 40 worshippers in a mosque.

Mr. Arafat flew in by helicopter from his Gaza headquarters for his first visit since Israeli troops drew from about 80 per cent the city a week ago.

His first visit on Sunday greeted by tens of thousands cheering Palestinians, but day's arrival was more low.

After landing, Mr. Arafat, in front of the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, symbolising the new, which has come to the num West Bank town to been under full Israeli occupation. About 200 people ended amid heavy security, welcome their president.

In addition to ministers, Mr. Arafat's self-rule on Friday night's meeting to involve members of executive committee of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Palestinian officials said.

Mr. Arafat's visit coincided with ceremonies marking the third anniversary of the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque, a sacred site for Muslims and Jews.

About 150 relatives of killed in the massacre robed next to City Hall. There were new calls for Jewish settlers who still live heavy Israeli army guard city center to leave.

"As long as the settlers will here, there can be no peace," said Arafat.

Kabariti sends messages to Netanyahu, Levy

TEL AVIV (Petra) — Jordan Thursday sent messages to the Israeli leadership dealing with Jordanian-Israeli relations, issues of common concern and developments in the Middle East Peace process, the various tracks. Jordan Ambassador to Israel (Rifa) first delivered one message to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and another to Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy. The letters were sent by Prime Minister A. Karim Kabariti. Mr. Kabariti said in his message to Mr. Levy the minister voiced Israel's appreciation of efforts by Ministry King Hussein Mr. Kabariti that he and Israel and the Palestinian teach the recent accord Hebron.

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